GAITŌ KAMISHIBAI IN POSTWAR JAPAN: PICTURE-STORYTELLING PERFORMANCE IN THE DEMOCRATIC PUBLIC SPHERE

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines a popular Japanese form of picture-storytelling street theater known as *gaitō kamishibai,* a pervasive form of children's entertainment from circa 1925 to 1965. In *gaitō kamishibai,* a live performer uses sequential painted picture panels in tandem with his own voice and bodily gesture to relay narrative. The *kamishibai* performer (*kamishibaiya*) would traditionally navigate the city on a bicycle, with a simple wooden stage for displaying the painted panels to his audience mounted on the back.

Focusing on two *kamishibai* picture-stories—*Kurama Ko-Tengu* and *Abarenbō Sazen*—that were produced in postwar Osaka by the association San'yūkai, founded in 1947, this thesis analyzes visual-literary themes in the picture-stories themselves that bear particular salience in articulating trends of postwar creative production and democratic participation. Further, when placed in conversation with other modes of modern historical picture-aided performance in Japan, these case studies implicate *gaitō kamishibai* in a modern *milieu* of visual expression and consumption.

In *Abarenbō Sazen,* the one-armed, one-eyed *rōnin* warrior Tange Sazen—a popular character in literature and film in twentieth-century Japan—articulates his identity in terms of personal memory and trauma. This *kamishibai* both appropriates and augments devices from a larger canon of postwar *jidaigeki*-style popular entertainment, as well as postwar stories of personal trauma more broadly. In *jidaigeki* the outcast itinerant hero often traverses an adverse landscape, toward a personal goal of justice and

change. Similarly, the *kamishibaiya*—equally isolated during his erratic movement around the city—has historically been viewed as a social outcaste. Yet, the *kamishibaiya* also functions as a type of educator who unites groups through his specialized performance. The *kamishibaiya,* like the heroes in his stories, wanders alone, to (perhaps paradoxically) bring about social progress in the postwar context.

When viewed within the context of descriptions of entrepreneurial agents who engage in the alternative economy of the black market, and drifting artists who develop highly individual styles of their own while participating in a variety of democratic groups in the postwar historical moment, *gaitō kamishibai* becomes a particularly striking example of how individual subjectivity flourishes through postwar democratic cooperation.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines g*aitō kamishibai's* negotiation of the theme of memory in the postwar Japanese context, but also its role in Japanese memory today, as a nostalgic and largely lost form of entertainment. In the term *gaitō kamishibai* (街頭紙芝居), *kamishibai* translates as "paper drama," or "paper theater," and *gaitō* refers to a particular commercial variant performed on the street in the public sphere. In the summer of 2014 while living in Osaka, Japan, I was surprised to find a troupe of *gaitō*-style *kamishibaiya* (performers of *kamishibai*) who perform each weekend in the temple courtyard at Senkōji (全興寺), a Buddhist temple in Osaka's Hirano Ward. Most prevalent between circa 1925 and 1965, this form of *kamishibai* is largely unknown to youth today. The Osaka troupe of performers, led by Suzuki Tsunekatsu, a professional *kamishibaiya* and youth culture researcher, was comprised of approximately eight performers in all, four of whom performed on the day I attended. Before a few rows of rickety wooden benches placed on the dirt floor of the temple courtyard, a vintage bicycle stood with its equally vintage wooden stage mounted on the back (which I am told is an heirloom) to hold the colorful picture panels used as part of performance.

A performer would take to his or her place next to the bicycle-mounted picture stage, slip a volume of about ten sequential picture-story panels into the wooden frame, and garner the children's attention with lively calling and the aid of wooden clappers called *hyōshigi* (拍子木). Using lively narration, performing distinct voices for each

character depicted in the picture-story panels, and often pointing to particularly pictorial elements to guide viewer understanding, the performer would narrate and elucidate meaning from the sequential panels, shuffling through them one at a time to progress the story.

At Senkōji performers sometimes used their own handmade picture-stories, and sometimes, those borrowed from local libraries, which are now mass printed and distributed by children's book publishers. Children's picture book publishers in Japan now print versions for educational use and family entertainment. One can even check out from the public library small tabletop frames made of either wood or plastic to hold the picture panels.

Suzuki Tsunekatsu performs the role of the itinerant *kamishibaiya* on a regular basis, in line with historical practice. He travels not just around Osaka, but even to China and countries in Southeast Asia performing *kamishibai,* because he feels, as he puts it, that by doing so he can keep the form of entertainment alive in the memory of younger generations. Suzuki's also adheres to the commercial tradition of selling *mizuame* and *sōsu senbei* (cheap snacks) to children for a price, albeit only for five *yen* a piece, as part of the participatory exchange that once characterized this form of entertainment.

Not unlike the staged reenactments of *gaitō kamishibai* in the Kyoto International Manga Museum, perhaps, in which costumed performers relay *kamishibai* stories to children on a fabricated stage littered with nostalgic *mise en scène*—an old mailbox, a painted backdrop of bygone residential architecture, and of course, a vintage bicycle—the Senkōji troupe's performances are more a demonstration of tradition lost, rather than a means for making money. But Suzuki's troupe is not confined by the walls of a museum,

which tend to reaffirm the static, past identity of the subjects housed therein. And by requiring children to pay for their sweets, albeit at a price that would have been typical generations ago, Suzuki asks children to engage in an exchange of sensorial entertainment for money; their small monetary gesture creates a premise for the understanding of *gaitō kamishibai'*s historical identity. *Kamishibai* at Senkōji uses setting (a real community intersection, the temple courtyard, rather than a museum space) and other devices to resurrect, if only for a moment, cultural memories of public participation around the *kamishibai* performer.

Gaitō kamishibai was, through the 1960s, an industry comprised of its performers, the workshop-style groups who produced the handmade painted picture-story panels used in performance (labor was often divided between those who painted the panels and those who arranged the story), and the *kashimoto* who rented panels to performers. But the performer was, historically, the most visible arm of *kamishibai* enterprise. Sharalyn Orbaugh, one of the first English-language scholars to engage *kamishibai* in rigorous academic analysis, begins her most recent book *Propaganda Performed: Kamishibai in Japan's Fifteen Year War* with the following account of a 1958 performance by famous *rakugo* performer San'yutei Kinba in Tokyo. The story told by San'yutei is a comically wry look back at life in wartime from a postwar perspective and gives a glimpse of the rather funny way in which *kamishibaiya* were able to not just entertain children, but lead community participation. First written by Onuki Kiyoka in 1934, San'yutei (re)presents the story almost a decade and a half after the war's end. He tells his audience of a landlord who oversees a back alley row house (*nagaya*), who brings his tenants together to organize a neighborhood defense troop and conduct air raid drills in this "time of

crisis."[1] But his tenants are confused by these terms (air raid, time of crisis), and humorous wordplay under the auspice of miscommunication *á la* Abbott and Costello ensues. The person who ultimately brings order and understanding to the rapidly disintegrating fabric of conversation is an itinerant *gaitō kamishibai* performer. The *kamishibaiya* is poor, a resident of a *nagaya* like the tenants here, but speaks in far more formal and correct Japanese than the other characters in this *rakugo* narrative. His eloquence, coupled with his tendency to traverse the imperial capital, causes the *nagaya* landlord to view him as a source of authoritative wisdom, despite his personal background being the same as everyone else.

> Frustrated, the landlord appeals for somebody who knows what's going on, and another man steps forward… [H]e says that he "constantly traverses the imperial capital engaged in a profession related to the education of young boys and girls."
>
> [The landlord] says, "'Traversing the capital, educating young people'—you must be a schoolteacher." "No," says his tenant, "I perform kamishibai." The audience roars with laughter.
>
> [W]hen the landlord explains that "this area is also part of the imperial capital," one of his tenants says, "This place, the imperial capital? Wow, the capital is a dump."[2]

Here the *kamishibaiya* occupies a position of limited but tangible power. The local group lends him the opportunity to speak and to facilitate discourse. The *kamishibaiya'*s position as a recitation specialist renders him worth listening to in the minds of individuals, and his itinerant lifestyle as a travelling performer makes him an authority on contemporary events. From this position, the *kamishibaiya* in this story bears witness to

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[1] Sharalyn Orbaugh, *Propaganda Performed: Kamishibai in Japan's Fifteen Year War* (Boston: Brill Publishing, 2014).

[2] This story is Orbaugh's account of a live recording of the *rakugo* story *Boku enshu* (Air Raid Practice, originally written in 1934 by Onuki Kiyoka) performed by San'yutei Kinba in 1958 to an audience in an unnamed theater in Tokyo, recording courtesy of the Cambridge University Library. See Orbaugh *Propaganda Performed*, 1.

community activism and even gets put in a leadership role despite his not being close with the landlord and tenants prior to this scene. He is an anonymous visitor, and perhaps therefore a strange choice for a leader in the moment. But the landlord defers to him because of his eloquence and position as a street corner educator (even as this title serves as a comic punchline for the *rakugo* audience). He therefore becomes someone to whom the members of the row house look for understanding and mutual support. *Kamishibai* here is simultaneously articulated as educational and frivolous, and its performer is both suspicious as a wandering, unknown outsider, yet immediately afforded trust by a close-knit local group. He therefore occupies an ambiguous, liminal role somewhere between outsider and community lynchpin. *Kamishibai* is a popular form of entertainment associated with the isolation of back alleys and *nagaya*—with the local. But its performer's movement about the city brings cosmopolitan knowledge—national connections—to the relatively uninformed, insular community. As part of a greater urban, and indeed, national community, the local finds itself implicated in a vast network of grassroots engagement and expression.

I am analyzing here a scholar's interpretation of an audio recording of a *rakugo* play about *kamishibai,* and this anecdote gets at the implications and difficulties inherent in my own project. *Rakugo,* which is itself a highly stylized performance, narrates the *kamishibai* performer's fictional run in with the row house tenants and their landlord, and further, this story is reinterpreted in the postwar context (as the story was originally written in 1934). Unlike *rakugo,* which was (and is) performed in a traditional theater space, *kamishibai* was performed in isolated, anonymous back alleys like the one in this story, and on countless generic street corners. It was seldom documented, likely because

performances were somewhat impromptu, but were also a pervasive and unsurprising part of daily life on the streets of Japan. Quite simply, it likely was not viewed as being worth documenting, unlike *rakugo.* Performance context, then, must be understood through mediated accounts of cultural and individual memory, such as this anecdote brought to our attention by Orbaugh, and the occasional photograph, which I analyze below, although such photographs do not provide detailed performance documentation either. On the occasion that photographs do capture *kamishibai* performances, they serve as little more than an index for assuring the viewer that *kamishibai* was indeed performed in a certain time and place, but do little to explain issues of viewer reception or devices and gestures of stylized performance.

In collective and cultural memory today *kamishibai* harbors feelings of nostalgia, but is kept at a psychological distance by the aging generation who remembers it. *Kamishibai* is, as Orbaugh puts it, an object of "mild derision—something one loved as a child, but now recognizes to have been tawdry; something that evokes the atmosphere of a gentler, simpler time in Japan's modern history, but a time that now seems a little shabby."[3] Considering the extreme economic depression experienced by Japanese toward the end of World War II and in the immediate years following, coupled with the literal destruction and deterioration of urban environments in particular during wartime, where *kamishibai* was one of the few attainable forms of entertainment for the hard-working and impoverished, it is perhaps no wonder that it holds this connotation. In famed photojournalist Domon Ken's album *Chikuhō no Kodomotachi* (*Children of Chikuhō,* 1960) in which he documents the daily life of children in the rural coal-mining town of Chikuhō in Fukuoka prefecture, the photographer includes two photographs of a

[3] Orbaugh, *Propaganda Performed*, 4.

kamishibaiya performing on a residential street that indeed situate *kamishibai* within an image of postwar rural life that is dust-covered, difficult, and, to use Orbaugh's word, shabby. They are captioned:

> ボタ山の見える炭住街のたそがれ。親たちと同じに貧しい労働者として生い育って行く子供たちには一生忘れがたい風景となるであろう。紙芝居が終われば、子どもたちの一日も暮。
>
> Twilight on in a charcoal residential area [mainly *nagaya*, or communal living row houses] with a view of Botayama [a manmade mountain of slag]. This view is an unforgettable one for the children who grow up in in this impoverished, hard labor lifestyle, who will become laborers [in the coal mine] like their parents. When the *kamishibai* is over, it marks the end of the day.
>
> 町は遠いし、お金はない。こどもたちのただ一つの楽しみは、毎日黒いゴロゴロの坂道を自転車を押し上げてやってくる紙芝居だ。拍子木をたたいておじさんがふれ廻ると、子どもたちは炭住街のかしいだ家や黒い丘から自分で稼いだお金をもってあふれ出してくる。アメとくじびきでおまけがもらえる５円の紙芝居は、炭住街の唯一の観劇だ。アメを買わない子どもたちは、遠慮してまわりに立っている。
>
> The city is far, and money is scarce. The children's one true joy is when the bicycle of the kamishibai man comes creaking up the black, rocky slope. The performer hits two wooden clappers together and the children come flooding excitedly from their homes and the surrounding black hills with money they earned themselves. The 5-yen kamishibai—with its small added attractions of sweets and lottery tickets—is the only entertainment available in the charcoal residential area. Children who do not buy candy restrain themselves, and stand on the periphery of the viewing audience.[4]

Domon Ken posits these photographs as slices from the daily life of the children, in which *kamishibai* is a short (but exciting and much welcomed) reprieve from hard work and a destitute existence. The *kamishibaiya's* appearance signals they have survived another day, acting as a tangible marker of passing time. Of course, this is not a documentation of *kamishibai* performance, but of the children of Chikuhō. We see their

[4] Domon Ken, *Chikuhō no Kodomotachi* (Tokyo: Patoria Shoten, 1960), 30–31.

collective gazes fervently fixed on the performer, some mouths gaping as they gnaw on candy—a sea of viewers oriented with excitement at the spectacle. Domon Ken captions his photographs, telling us in the space below that the *kamishibai* man's visit to this rural town is the children's "one true pleasure," and when his bicycle come rumbling near, they burst out of their homes with their meager change to buy candy (with money they have earned themselves) and listen to the stories. The "*goro-goro"* onomatopoeic sound of his bicycle on rough earth, as the caption reads is, perhaps significantly, the same sound made by the cart in Koike Kazuo and Goseki Kojima's *Lone Wolf and Cub* (子連れ狼, 1970) as the father approaches with his infant son in a wooden cart. Similarly, the *kamishibaiya* carries with him the simple joy usually associated with childhood that the samurai's son in the graphic novel seems to embody. We also understand that *kamishibai* might hold similar joy for adults as well since he also sells lottery tickets—a game, a chance at a better existence. *Kamishibai* plays host to ideas of entertainment and fantasy for people of all ages in this "charcoal residential area," as Domon Ken terms it.

These photographs document *kamishibai's* pervasiveness in postwar Japan, even in this rural mining town. The performer in each photograph is the same man with the same wooden stage, which is as weathered and rough-looking as the precarious wooden housing that also appears in these compositions. The photographs were likely taken on two different days, considering the slightly unique arrangement of the *kamishibaiya* and his bicycle-mounted wooden stage in respect to buildings in each. In the first photograph, which is printed as a two-page spread, we see the *kamishibaiya* in action, left hand about to pull the front panel out to reveal the next one, mouth open telling his story. The photographer shoots from behind and to the left side of the *kamishibaiya,* which allows

us to see the pile of picture-story panels that the performer has already shown the children, the written narrative script on the *verso* of the last panel lying face up. We cannot see what the children see, and so cannot identify the picture-story. And we do not see the performer's face and bodily gesture as the children do; we see him in profile. In the other photograph, Domon Ken captures a similar crowd of young viewers either before or after the story has been performed. The *kamishibaiya* rummages in the case that supports the small wooden stage, imaginably looking for candy, or a lottery ticket (sold to older customers as Domon Ken's caption tells us). We see this crowd of children here in the larger context of their daily environment. In the middle ground behind them are timber-constructed houses with pitched roofs, with nonuniformly shaped slats that appear splintery and damaged. Then in the background a hazy silhouette of *botayama*, the manmade mountain of coal slag (waste from the mining process) that accrued over years of hard labor in the poor rural town seems to preside over the children's momentary reverie, as a reminder of the harshness that preceded their viewing and waits for them each morning. Here Domon Ken allows the viewer's gaze to move through space—foreground, middle ground, background—to identify a common shabbiness in the *kamishibaiya's* humble wooden stage, the disrepair of the town's housing, and the heap of waste collected over time, to characterize Chikuho and its children as impoverished, destitute, and tawdry. *Kamishibai*, in these photographs as much as in collective memory, is inseparably linked to hardship, struggle, and trauma in postwar Japan. The *kamishibaiya* in Domon Ken's photographs inserts himself into the local and particular and provides ephemeral entertainment.

Examining *Gaitō Kamishibai* in Postwar Osaka

This thesis takes as its case studies two extant picture-stories—the actual painted panels that are now relics of quotidian performance—from a collection of such examples produced by artists in the postwar Osaka association San'yūkai (三邑会, founded in 1947 by artist Shiozaki Genichirō), who also rented the association's collective work to performers, as a *kashimoto* (貸元). These panels are hand painted compositions on paper affixed to cardboard and usually lacquered for waterproofing so that they could withstand the *kamishibaiya*'s travels and outdoor performance. They are produced by individual artists (usually credited in the first panel), with the story inscribed on the *verso* of each panel so that it was only visible to the performer. This story could serve as a script, and in the classroom form of *kamishibai* in particular, which Orbaugh asserts is the forerunner to the propagandist *kamishibai* distributed by the Japanese Empire during wartime, it ensures that the performer relays the story exactly as the producer (and national censors) intended. In *gaitō kamishibai* as in *rakugo* performance, however, live improvisation tends to reflect audience interests; a contemporary sense of humor and unexpected outburst are key to grabbing and maintaining patrons. Therefore, these panels may indeed serve as relics of performance, but not necessarily as documentation.

In the chapters that follow I analyze two *kamishibai* picture-story series produced rather closely in time and space within a single association of artists. I then situate such commercial-creative production within related movements and cultural circles of the postwar historical moment. In the first two chapters in particular, memory is a central theme in my negotiation of *kamishibai.* First, I draw on tangible memory of performance, as embodied by the picture-story panels for Hidari Hisayoshi's (左久良) twenty-nine-

volume series of narrative *kamishibai* panels *Kurama Ko-Tengu* (鞍馬小天狗, after 1947, Osaka International Children's Literature Collection) in Chapter One. Here, I show how both the picture-story itself and its typical performance context raise cultural memories of early modern carnival festivities. Situating both the protagonist in *Kurama Ko-Tengu* and his live orator within the tradition of the carnival trickster, I illuminate historical devices for soliciting public participation and situate *kamishibai* within a longer history of picture-storytelling.

In Chapter Two, I relate the narrative device of memory flashback in Yamamoto Gohare (山本梧晴) and Sado Masashi's (佐渡 正士) *Abarenbō Sazen* (暴れん坊左膳, *Rowdy Sazen,* after 1947, Osaka International Children's Literature Collection) to the pervasive trope of the individual hero's personal negotiation of trauma (and its pendant residual effects as memory) in *jidaigeki* film and literature, a Japanese narrative genre of historical drama that has its roots in *kabuki* theatre that finds prolific expression in postwar Japan. The fictional hero navigates the adverse Japanese landscape in a physical sense, while also mentally navigating personal memory, on a journey toward transformed identity. This *kamishibai* not only engages the canon of *jidaigeki,* but also a long history of iterations of the hero Tange Sazen, both recalling and rejecting public memories that define the character. I therefore offer *Abarenbō Sazen* as a case where the contemporary and particular vie with the historical and canonic to differentiate itself in the moment, as an original body of work produced by (two) individual creators.

This frames the reader's understanding of the final chapter, then, where I discuss the relative role of the individual creator in the postwar context, in reference to associations, or circles (specifically that of San'yūkai), and the nation. Whereas the lone

individual in this context is responsible for the formation of their own subjectivity, the postwar circle, then, is defined as a collective of individual creators—a democratic group. In challenge to historical memories of wartime associations that instead employed a top down dissemination of goods, information, and power that subordinated the individual, diffuse networks of associations in postwar Japan—where lone entrepreneurs, proverbial vigilantes, and artists differentiate themselves through group participation in comparative contrast to their cohort—offer evidence of grassroots democratic participation.

A related theme in the chapters that follow is that of itinerant wandering, which is inherent in the popular practice of *gaitō kamishibai* since performers had to daily seek out groups of potential viewers in order to make a profit, but also serves as a visual-narrative theme the *kamishibai* picture-stories that are the focus of Chapter One and Chapter Two. In Chapter One, I explore how the *kamishibai* character Kurama Ko-Tengu, as a wandering samurai-detective, serves as an example for honing skills of critical investigation. The wandering gaze of the hero (and the viewer who often embodies the hero's perspective) illuminates social injustice and works to interrogate the political institution of the feudal *bakufu.* His propensity to wander also allows him to interject himself into events, unexpected by other characters, so as to play the part of the disruptive trickster, further undermining civic authority. The itinerancy of Kurama Ko-Tengu aptly mirrors that of the *kamishibai* performer and draws attention to the similar role, illuminating the performer's capacity for disruption and even dissidence. I use this picture-story to thematically unpack the distinct features of the *kamishibai* performance medium and to situate it within domestic and global postwar phenomena that interrogate modes of subjective understanding, response, and public participation through devices of

disruption and "nonsense." In other words, the *kamishibaiya's* seemingly erratic navigation of the city situates the performer at the center of modern postwar thought, in a position where the performer can visibly articulate the relationship of the individual to the nation and to the perceivable environment. Then in Chapter Two, I explore how this theme of wandering serves as a pervasive theme in *jidaigeki* entertainment, where the navigation of the adverse landscape ultimately leads to the *jidaigeki* hero's intervention in sociopolitical life. Here itinerant movement is a solitary act, albeit one with subversive and transformative potential.

My thematic focus on the wandering nature of *gaitō kamishibai* performance and the itinerant hero associated with *jidaigeki*-style storytelling, who often appears as a social outcaste—an oddball, not wholly understood by nucleic society who achieves a personal form of justice in round-about ways—allows me to illuminate a fundamental difference in the cultural place that *kamishibai* occupies in postwar Japan as compared to wartime, which is the primary focus of scholars like Sharalyn Orbaugh, Barak Kushner, and others. The path of the national hero in wartime propaganda *kamishibai* in particular is portrayed as linear and inevitable; in Orbaugh's examples in particular, heroes barrel toward their goal of self-sacrifice for the national body with focus and gusto. The path toward personal transformation and the attainment of some particular form of justice in the postwar *jidaigeki* examples discussed here, however, is far more meandering and indirect. Wandering, at times, delays participation in events on the part of the protagonist and denotes the slow internal process of personal transformation carried out within the hero. As part of a nation of individuals in flux, navigating new discourses on subjectivity, democratic participation, and the newly emerging image of Japan as an international

participant in the Cold War, *kamishibai* artists in the moment present personal transformation as an important, albeit slow and indirect, process. The picture-stories analyzed here work as particularly salient expressions of the grassroots culture identified by scholar Justin Jesty where the visibility of the personal, the particular, contributes to a collective network of democratic participation.

Defining "Postwar"

There are several related definitions of "postwar" with which I work in this thesis. But in all uses, the term demarcates the time period following Japan's surrender in 1945 at the end of World War II. The immediate years following war—1945 to 1947—were characterized by extreme economic depression, shortage, and general want. Urban infrastructure and networks of trade and acquisition alike existed in a state of ruin. While the government set up ration programs, its supply was neither consistent nor sufficient, which left many people to resort to navigating the alternative economy of the black market to acquire basic food and necessities, in addition to materials like paper, paint, and the like used in *kamishibai* panel production. The Japanese economy underwent a revitalization as Japan became a staging and production arm for U.S. efforts during the Korean War that began in 1950, and so economically speaking, the Japanese economy entered a different dispensation characterized by growth nearing this point. The postwar period is also quite inseparable from the dominating presence of the Allied Occupation that pushed along social, political, and economic reformation until its effective end in 1952. Therefore, the early 1950s often serve as a cutoff in tandem with the end of war in 1945 that defines the "postwar" period. My analysis of postwar democratic participation and creative production, however, is less concerned with bookending the postwar

moment. Rather, I identify a tone of unsettled transformation specifically connected to the trope of the individual's search for personal identity and progress that is expressed through materiality and performance in the years after World War II. That is, I identify a general restructuring of thought and community participation in the wake of war. But as for an end date for this type of "postwar" creative expression, I offer none, partly because such themes as wandering, memory, and trauma continue to pervade heroic tales in Japanese popular entertainment even today. Similarly, the type of professional participation in creative circles that I discuss still continues in the contemporary *manga* industry as well, in a very similar form. In other words, I wish to point to the origin of certain cultural concepts that have not yet ended.

I have chosen to focus on *kamishibai* in the postwar context because, while this is certainly a rather late portion in the history of this form of entertainment, *kamishibai* undergoes significant pressures and changes in this moment. And here, *kamishibai* becomes a tangible expression of modes of creative production and participation across Japan in the moment. My analysis of these panels privileges their materiality and production history, not just to illuminate the distinct features of the medium but to situate such objects within an extremely disadvantageous socioeconomic context—a moment of extreme transition for Japanese society in several ways—in which they were produced. In immediate postwar Japan, *kamishibai* suffers loss and shortage along with the rest of Japanese society and hobbles along in the immediate postwar years, a mirror for the nation at large. In Chapter Five of his book *Kamishibai Cultural History: Deciphering the History of Kamishibai Through Archival Documents* (紙芝居文化史: 資料で読み解く紙芝居の歴史 , 2011) Ishiyama Yukihiro discusses how the *kamishibai* industry,

which he paints as a microcosm of the nation at large in many ways, suffers extreme destruction by the end of the war and so pushes for rebuilding and overhaul in the years following the war's end. In wartime, many of *kamishibai*'s professionals, like those in any other industry, were shipped to the battlefront, and many did not return alive.[5] In addition, major cities saw the almost total destruction of their urban infrastructure, which decimated usual trade routes and supply chains through which artists rented painted panels and bought candy to sell to their audiences and panel artists acquired materials for production.[6] *Kamishibai* in the postwar moment existed in a state of severe supply depletion, infrastructural trauma, and human loss.[7] But despite this, Japanese scholars like Ishiyama Yukihiro have depicted trends in postwar *kamishibai* associations, commerce, and legislation as highly creative, revolutionary, and above all, democratic in nature since they judiciously utilized extant threads of personal and commercial connection to keep production going while deferring to a diverse group of professionals to collectively drive industry change.

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[5] "この時期、街頭紙芝居に目を転じると、製作所は東京で唯一「正ちゃん会」という極小製作所がかろうじて息をしているのみで、出来上がったものも東京では配給ルートが寸断され、かつ供給量も少しなかったので到底活用しきれず、地方へ送り出されていた。" "In this historical moment the focus of street-corner *kamishibai* shifts, and a factory in Tokyo, the unique Macchan Association as it was called, putt-putted along, and actually accomplished things even as the distribution roots in Tokyo had fallen apart and the supply feed was extremely weak, without focusing on the impossibility of the task, set off toward rural areas." Translation is my own. Ishiyama Yukihiro, *Kamishibai Cultural History: Deciphering the History of Kamishibai through Archival Documents* (紙芝居文化史: 資料で読み解く紙芝居の歴史) (Tokyo: Hōbunshorin Publishers, 2011), 114.

[6] "紙芝居業者に至っては東京市中でかつては２、０００人とも２、５００人ともいわれたものが１０人ほどとなり、飴類の配給を毎月１０日分だけ受けて営業している程度で、ほとんど壊滅状態だった。空襲があり、学童疎開があり、飴類の枯渇、何より制作画家や業者自体が出征していった。" "In the case of *kamishibai*, only 10 entrepreneurs (traders) remained—there used to be 2,000 or 2,500 traders at one time in the center of Tokyo—who vended their sweets each month on the Tenth, so for those who survived the war, business was quite dead. There were aerial attacks, evacuations of school children, and worse yet, production artists and the traders themselves were gone to the front of battle fields." Translation is my own. Ibid.

[7] "商売として成り立つ条件は奪われていたのである。" "All the conditions necessary for the *kamishibai* industry to function were not met; the war bereaved them of everything." Translation is my own. Ibid., 115.

In Osaka as elsewhere in Japan, the effects of *kamishibai* reformation on a national level, led by participants in Tokyo, would have had a profound effect on the creative and commercial practices of *kamishibai.* In October the Japanese Kamishibai Association established Sōma Taizō as its representative, and Saki Akio assumed the post of Executive director.[8] Ishiyama Yukihiro identifies this as evidence that *kamishibai* (both educational and commercial) collectively desired to represent their interests and play a part in furthering postwar democracy.[9] Situating itself as the successor to the prewar Japanese Educational Kamishibai Association, the postwar Japanese Kamishibai Association began to publish the *Kamishibai* journal. And democratic advancement culminated in March of 1948 (Shōwa year 23) with formation of the "Democratic People's Kamishibai Assembly," led by Chairperson Saki Akio, with Inaniwa Keiko, Horio Seishi, Takahashi Gosan, and Sōma Taizō from the educational side, as well as Kata Kōji, Nagamatsu Takeo, and Matsui Mitsuyoshi, Kako Satoko, and Dohen Yashushiko from the commercial side, collectively enrolling as the main forces behind the movement. This movement diverged in two different directions, however, in November of 1950 (Shōwa year 25), when the educational arm formed the "Educational Kamishibai Collegium," moving toward the formation of a joint stock company, and the commercial side, the "Japanese Kamishibai *Gentō,"* or "Japanese *Kamishibai* Phantasmagoria," the later term recalling the visual sensationalism of popular lantern theaters that were popular in Japan and globally from around the Nineteenth Century.

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[8]Ishiyama, *Kamishibai Cultural History*, 114–136.

[9] "それまで、対立的にあった教育紙芝居系と街頭紙芝居系が共に戦後民主主義推進に一役買おうというもので、紙芝居制作で相互協力をしていこうというものだった。" "The educational and street-corner *kamishibai* systems who once competed now, together, were playing a role in promoting postwar democracy, building mutual cooperation in *kamishibai* production." Translation is my own. Ibid., 115.

Kamishibai's newly reiterated postwar identity in this moment is characterized by a diversity of interests and efforts. Further, not limiting heeded voices to the old guard of professionals that were already entrenched in *kamishibai* production, Ishiyama says, the creative field resonated with the new, fresh ideas and creations of amateurs and professionals alike, in a highly revolutionary manner.[10] *Kamishibai* in this moment allowed itself to change and grow organically, according to the voices of any and all willing participants.

Yet, despite suffering the loss of its practicing professionals, materials, and supply chains, *kamishibai* began an extreme overhaul by which its participants placed the creative form in staunch contrast to wartime national policy (propagandist) *kamishibai.* Practitioners and creators carved out a new identity for the medium through the (re)formation of its association structures and a (re)presenting of its identity in the political arena. Working to both differentiate itself from national policy campaigns that employed *kamishibai* as a conduit for propagandist messages in wartime, and to (re)present creative practice in a new and diverse light, figures like Kata Kōji, Sōma Taizō, Otani Shino, and Mizuki Shigeru in Tokyo collectively inaugurated new *gaitō kamishibai* associations and factories and made possible the massive distribution of new picture-stories through which *kamishibai* was effectively reborn as a new and separate postwar form of creative production.[11] Beginning in December of 1945, Kata and Sōma worked toward the opening of the "Friends Association" factory for *gaitō kamishibai*

[10]専門作家によらない作品が、流通ルートに継続的にのることは、当時として画期的だった。" "Not relying on professional writers, the group resonated with the revolutionary tone of the historical moment to ensure the proper and continued circulation of its publications." Translation is my own. Ibid., 116.

[11] See Chapter Five in Ibid. Ishiyama, *Kamishibai Cultural History*, 114–136.

picture-stories, and Otani and Mizuki launched the "New Japan *Gageki* [Pictorial Drama] Corporation" one month later, beginning their own distribution the following year.[12] Thus, as Ishiyama puts it, "*gaitō kamishibai* righted itself of its own accord, and took its first [postwar] steps forward with extraordinary momentum, and even provided significant financial relief for unemployed returning war veterans."[13] At first, the picture-story panels as much as the snacks sold during *kamishibai* performance were indeed meager products due to national shortage, but out of necessity, creativity flourished and kept the medium afloat. *Kamishibai* is a tangible relic of struggle, reformation, and a general shaking up of notions like individual expression and democratic participation in the postwar public sphere.

[12] "加太の「黄金バット」（ただし仏像マスクタイプ）が復活し、雄谷信乃夫・滋父子による「新日本画劇社」（葛飾）もひと月遅れで発足、翌年１月から配給を開始している。" "Kata's Golden Bat (a Buddha-image masked type of hero) is revived, Otani Shino and Shigeru (father and son) launched the "New Japan ga-geki (picture drama) Association" (Katsushika) one month later, and they started distribution in January of the following year." Translation is my own. Ibid., 115.

[13] "こうして街頭紙芝居は、自力でいち早く立ち直りの第一歩を踏み出し、復員してきた人々に、必要に見合った数量の失業対策事業を施したことになる。以後、続々街頭紙芝居製作所が立ち上がっていった。" "Thus *gaitō kamishibai* righted itself of its own, and took its first step forward with extraordinary momentum as it subjected itself to quotas for meeting the needs of demobilized persons." Translation is my own. Ibid., 115.

CHAPTER ONE

KAMISHIBAI AS SUBVERSIVE SIDESHOW: THE TRICKSTER IN HIDARI HISAYOSHI'S *KURAMA KO-TENGU*

Hidari Hisayoshi (左久良) produced his twenty-nine-volume series of narrative *kamishibai* panels *Kurama Ko-Tengu* (鞍馬小天狗, after 1947, Osaka International Children's Literature Collection) as part of the circle of *kamishibai* artists known as San'yūkai, founded in 1947 in Osaka, Japan. Such panel series functioned as a visual aid for the popular Japanese picture-storytelling street theater *gaitō kamishibai* (街頭紙芝居), most popular between circa 1925 and 1965, in which live recitation, painted images, and literary narrative work to mutually support and undermine one another simultaneously, in a curious relationship that I explore in detail below. The main character for whom the *kamishibai* is named is no doubt based on the fictional samurai detective Kurama Tengu, the protagonist from popular fiction novels by Osaragi Jirō (1924–59) and a 1928 silent film, even as he appears in this *kamishibai* in childlike stature and demeanor: a comically miniature, trickster version of the popular hero. Kurama Ko-Tengu is depicted in the title panel with confident stance and defiant smirk.[14] His apple cheeks blush red, and his sharp eyes dart to the upper right-hand corner of the composition, glistening with active anticipation and deviancy (qualities he also expresses in subsequent panels). A *katana*

[14] For images see the Osaka International Children's Literature Collection's online database of its *kamishibai* holdings: http://www.library.pref.osaka.jp/central/kamishibai/hb0073n/0001/hb0073n_0001.html.

sword juts out from his belt on his body's left side, hilt protruding perpendicular to his body, waiting to be drawn by his right hand, and the intensity of his right fist suggests that he is indeed ready to draw his sword and fight at any moment.

The *kamishibai* hero's dark garment with white starbursts, along with his bodily arrangement with one arm pulled up and out of the sleeve and freed from its constraints, reminds of another now famous *rōnin*-style character, played by actor Mifune Toshiro in Kurosawa Akira's *jidaigeki* film *Yōjinbō* (用心棒 ,1961), which is set in 1860 at the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603–1868). And from the depiction of garments and presence of the Shinsengumi (新選組, a special police force for the feudal *bakufu*, or military government) in this *kamishibai* picture-story, we know the setting to be roughly contemporary with that of Kurosawa's film.

Kurama Ko-Tengu belongs to a class of historical fiction rogue heroes in postwar Japanese literature, film, and popular culture—often wandering *rōnin* (浪人, literally "wandering person," a masterless samurai)—who are characterized by erratic gesture, function as social aberrations, and often, exist within a historical drama setting where they challenge viewer expectations regarding behavior and morality. In the film *Yōjinbō,* for example, the *rōnin* hero Tsubaki Sanjūrō (a made-up alias) who is an outcast for hire singles himself out as perpetually energized, violent, and unpredictable, much like the character Kurama Ko-Tengu in this *kamishibai,* which serves to alienate both protagonists from their respective fictional societies. Tsubaki often draws his arms up and out of his sleeves, to stroke his chin in contemplation or merely rest his arms in a folded position inside the wrapped breast of his *hakama*, in something of a nervous tick that displays a childlike lack of decorum. His hands move ambiguously beneath the folds of

fabric in agitation in idle moments between fight scenes. The seemingly unconscious gesture becomes a sign of the hero's oddity. His propensity to fidget is a bodily manifestation of his function in reference to the community; erratic and defiant, he is uninhibited by the restrictions of the social fabric. Similarly the *kamishibai* hero Kurama Ko-Tengu follows suit, freeing his arm of clothing's restrictions in the title panel in a familiar signifier of the *jidaigeki* brand of hero to cinephiles then and now, allowing his body the freedom to act on whim. But in his small stature, caricature-like facial features, tricks, and stunts, Kurama Ko-Tengu is a shocking and comical aberration even among this class of fictional heroes.

The viewer of this *kamishibai* cannot assume a passive role while watching this *kamishibai,* as both image and the nature of *kamishibai* performance implicates him or her in the protagonist's games. As Kurama Ko-Tengu toys with a band of corrupt Shinsengumi the viewer often embodies the perspective of the hero himself. Devices of framing and cinematic-style sequence generate a slippage between the viewer's perspective and the hero's to signify a loosening of the boundaries between the viewer's space and that depicted in the painted panels. In the first few panels of *Kurama Ko-Tengu* the perspective that is granted to the viewer is often approximate to that of the hero himself. We the viewer can imagine ourselves to be the hero of this story, but we also function as his witness or accomplice, legitimating his actions through our presence. As the sequence of panel compositions guides us from a perspective far above the fray into this position of the hero-witness below, then throughout fictional space in Volume 1, viewer perspective functions as a device for illuminating evidence of social injustice and presenting it to the viewer while also placing the viewer in the middle of the action as if

prompting him or her to act as the hero (does). When considered within the typical viewing context of *gaitō kamishibai*—on busy street corners, and at urban intersections of pedestrian transit, which allows the *kamishibai* performer to attract large groups of children with his promise of sweets and a story—this slippage between the viewer's perspective and the hero's in the panels' composition takes on meaning. Since viewers can optically explore the spaces of the story as a visual extension of their own quotidian world since they can imagine the testing and application of their own judgments in this space, the protagonist's heroics, then, unbound by pictorial or narrative space, bleed into the reality of the public sphere. Two worlds (one fictional, the other experiential) become one in this modern public mode of viewing.

In what follows I analyze the *kamishibai* picture-story *Kurama Ko-Tengu* to identify inherent themes that resonate with its typical performance context. The *kamishibai's* samurai detective both gathers and presents evidence of injustice, but also undermines his own role as objective observer by actively and violently intervening in the actions of the Shinsengumi to oscillate between active and passive, objective and subjective, thereby permeating the usual boundaries between these disparate roles. And the live performer similarly transgresses boundaries as he intervenes in painted image via speech and gesture, breaking down the usual wall between spectacle and spectator. I therefore argue that both story and performance medium use disruption and intervention as a devices for cultivating critical and investigational skills in public viewership. I consider *Kurama Ko-Tengu* in connection with the distinct features of the *kamishibai* medium to show how it generates viewing and learning dynamics that are found in modern fiction, film, and carnival-style festivity that tend to create internal moments of

consideration and viewing in the space of the public sphere. *Kamishibai*, in a distinctly Modernist impulse identified in modern conceptual performance art by Arthur C. Danto, displays a propensity to collapse spaces of fiction and experiential life into a single jumble of ideas to upset traditional social structures and categories of understanding. The *kamishibai* medium continually appeals to both private/individual and public/participatory modes of consideration, blurring the line between self and society. In this, *kamishibai* illuminates, particularly through this example of a samurai detective story where removed surveillance and intimate intervention are carried out by a single protagonist, the roles of intervention, appropriation, (re)iteration, and creative gesture in modern Japanese and global forms of democratic performance and participation in the public sphere.

In Panel 1-2 of *Kurama Ko-Tengu* (the first panel of the story following the title panel) the viewer gets a bird's eye view of the bridge from far above, rendering the figures below in small flicks of the paintbrush that are barely distinguishable—an objectively distant view of the action. While the Shinsengumi converge on the peasant below, the compositional perspective of the sequential panels "zoom" (to use a cinematic term) from an aerial view far above to the action below (in the following panel, 1-3), and subsequent panel compositions then oscillate between multiple perspectives to lend an intimate visual understanding of the depicted event. First as removed surveillance, then as something akin to an omnipresent, ghostly observer on the ground, the viewer's framed perspective allows him or her to gather evidence, map out the spatial dynamics of the depicted event, and insert an embodied eye into the assault of a band of Shinsengumi on a lone, cowering peasant. The viewer's gaze, which initially appears to be disembodied and

distant, comes to embody that of the hero.

Parallel in height to the other human figures, we are presented with a glimpse of the cornered peasant from behind his Shinsengumi assaulters, seemingly from the bridge's railing on the opposite side (the precise position that the hero Kurama Ko-Tengu will occupy a few panels later). In the very next panel (1-4) we see the same arrangement of figures from behind the peasant, his back and head appearing in the extreme foreground and blocking our view of a good portion of the bridge and assaulters. Indeed, such a quick move that evades the notice of the other figures, as none look our way, would require superhuman speed and stealth. Then suddenly, we are back on the original side of the bridge, opposite the action, in the subsequent panel.

In *Kurama Ko-Tengu* the oscillation of vantage points from behind the Shinsengumi assaulters, then the victim, then back is highly erratic and as such builds anticipation for impending action in the viewer while providing an ideal view-in-the-round (which the wide-eyed viewer would strain to assemble as images are presented). It lends a detailed understanding of the situation; the viewer is now well-informed and able to make judgments on the apparent injustice of the assault. We see the Shinsengumi leader close in with his sword on the cowering victim (1-5 and 1-6, as he gets closer and closer). Then, in 1-7, the hero appears. He suddenly sits perched on the top railing in the viewer's immediate foreground without explanation, precisely where the viewer's visual exploration of the fray in detail first began, causing the viewer in retrospect to realize that this embodied, erratic perspective approximated that of the hero. Kurama Ko-Tengu seems to appear out of nowhere since earlier depictions of the bridge from above did not include his figure. The movement of his agile body through space in ghostly, clandestine

style relates to his character's vocation as detective. His critical gaze is swift. It works to amass evidence for judgment of the injustice at hand. But it also provides evidence of a moral rational for his intervention in the event, as then he comes to the rescue of the lone unarmed peasant. No sooner does he appear, then he leaps into action to intervene. The gaze of the hero-viewer does not remain distanced from the event, but materializes with the body of the hero to actively intervene in the progression of events. Our initial sleuthing (the viewer-as-hero's) leads to active intervention; we gather evidence, serve as witness, then dole out punishment in an instantaneous, muddled version of democratic process fueled by visual investigation. This too attests to the *kamishibai* medium's ability to break down the usual distance between viewer and spectacle, by creating an active investment and soliciting interaction. This interaction can take place in mental fantasy alone, but as I witnessed in Osaka, in live *kamishibai* performance children tend to blurt out orders for the hero to act against the villains when narrative tension comes to a head, in highly interactive fashion; the removed realm of visual narrative is directly confronted by the voices of the viewers, as they attempt to will the progression of narrative themselves.

Kurama Ko-Tengu proves himself to be a keen, sly investigator time and again in this picture-story. In Volume 4 the Shinsengumi plots to poison the hero and his sidekick by contaminating the food served to them at an inn, coercing the owner to participate in their plan. A stray cat wanders in by chance and draws the hero's attention to the food, cuing him to realize that something is wrong (Volume 5). The cat draws attention to a potential danger for the hero to sort out, aptly paralleling the role of the performer of *kamishibai* who gestures at narrative and visual elements but does not solve issues of

meaning or prescribe a particular reaction for the independent and critical viewer-investigator. While both cat and sidekick fall prey to the poisoned food, Kurama Ko-Tengu does not. In Panel 5-10 we see the hero, one knee on the ground, left foot poised to propel him with force toward the door, fist on sword hilt in readiness, and piercing gaze aimed at the door in expectation that his foes will soon enter, we see that visual and physical readiness are complementary traits in the detective. A keen observer, he listens at the door (Panel 6-2), then settles on a game of trickery in lieu of direct combat and allows the Shinsengumi to find him seemingly unconscious, as though he too has eaten the poisoned food, with the other two. The Shinsengumi carry him and his sidekick to a nearby well and toss them in to dispose of them, but the hero then leaps from the well to attack when the Shinsengumi least expect it. His practical application of the senses toward critical investigation has provided an ideal opportunity. Kurama Ko-Tengu is a samurai detective (like his counterpart in Osaragi's novels and the silent film). He is calculating, patient, and critical in his evaluation of situations, but also a force in battle. His two roles (passive and active, contemplative and rash) vie for control of the character at various moments in the story.

Duality in the character Kurama Ko-Tengu, who is at once a detective (passive, methodical) and warrior (active, volatile) reminds of the duality of the *kamishibai* performer himself, who is both a passive conduit for narrative and active interventionist. The complicated interplay of these two roles activates viewer interest and tests critical subjectivity. Both hero and the medium that bring him to life are characterized by competing opposites, passive and active. The hero's transition from ghostly observer to fearsome intervening protector is a sudden frustration to the Shinsengumi. He disrupts the

flow of events and subordinates them to his own set of mores. Similarly, the *kamishibai* performer intervenes in the interval to hijack visual narrative, adding and augmenting meaning, and in the process soliciting the viewer to do the same. This *kamishibai* privileges critical (visual) investigation, modeled in narrative ideal by Kurama Ko-Tengu as a detective, whose gaze is shared and merged with that of the viewer. As narrative tension builds the hero leaps in to intervene, and the viewer-participant works in tandem with the performer to personally guide narrative meaning. To refer to *kamishibai* as picture-storytelling is perhaps misleading since it does not merely relay the story from image to viewer (although this part of how it is conceived by the panel artist). Rather, the narrative is carefully unpacked, questioned, predicted, and revised in the moment by both viewer and performer in an atmosphere of democratic participation that privileges individual subjectivity.

The cinematic-style sequencing that progresses the visual narrative, one painted panel to the next, is at odds with the picture-story's themes of interruption and intervention. Similar to cinematic montage the panel format structures an ordered viewing through its sequential painted images.[15] This is something that is visible in *Kurama Ko-Tengu,* in the first few panels in particular, as each sequential panel's perspective carries the viewer through space and into the action below with authoritative power. Knowledge of the event is gained incrementally via the sequential presentation of painted panels that propel the viewer through the narrative. Like frames on a film reel presented at a much slower pace than twenty-four frames per second, the visual sequence

[15] *Kamishibai* artist and theorist Kata Kōji cites the filmic work of Sergei Eisenstein, 1898–1948, and Vsevolod Pudovkin, 1893–1953, on montage in cinema as particularly formative to his own work and that of others in *kamishibai*. See Orbaugh, "Kamishibai and the Art of the Interval," *Mechademia* 7, No. 1 (2012): 78–100, 86.

pulls the viewer along in a preset rhythm, dictated by the panels' painter. Acknowledging this, Sharalyn Orbaugh has argued that *kamishibai*'s sequential format has the potential to create a streamlined narrative, prepackaged for viewer consumption, making it an ideal conduit for primary education and propaganda messages in that it relays a message in its complete, ordered form to the viewer.[16] Neat, constant, and indeed much like a film, the narrative flows into viewer consciousness and retains connections between narrative points, one panel to the next, to adhere itself in totality to the individual mind. But Orbaugh also identifies an internal struggle within the *kamishibai* medium itself, between its sequential prefabricated panels and its live performer, where the latter functions as a disruptor of the preordained visual narrative flow through gesture; choices in how, when, and at what speed the panels are cycled through; and improvised additions or changes to the story written on the *verso* of the painted panels that is intended to serve as a script. Sharalyn Orbaugh characterizes *kamishibai* as a medium based on visual and narrative interval, which is the conceptual space where disruption occurs.[17] The space *between* one panel and the next—that pause or switch where the live performer shuffles to a new painted panel—is what for Orbaugh is the most distinctive feature of the medium, and it is these intervals that undermine the structure of ordered viewing. In these moments, these "intervals," the performer (as I witnessed in the summer of 2014 at a *kamishibai*

[16] Sharalyn Orbaugh differentiates between *kyōiku kamishibai* (教育紙芝居, or "educational" *kamishibai*) that could be (and occasionally, still is) found in children's classrooms, and *gaitō kamishibai,* the commercial version performed in public spaces for a profit, for which this story of *Kurama Ko-Tengu* would have been used. See for example her latest book But during Japan's Fifteen Years' War (1931–45) and the Allied Occupation (1945–52) *kyōiku kamishibai* also appeared at the nexus of public life, as highly-formulated, predigested stories with propagandist underpinnings produced under the eye of the government-backed Japan Educational Kamishibai Association (日本教育紙芝居協会) during the war, and SCAP afterward. See her *Propaganda Performed: Kamishibai in Japan's Fifteen Year War* and "How the Pendulum Swings: Kamishibai and Censorship under the Allied Occupation," in Tomi Suzuki, Hirokazu Toeda, Hikari Hori and Kazushige Munakata, eds., *Censorship, Media and Literary Culture in Japan: From Edo to Postwar* (Tokyo: Shin'yôsha, 2012), 161–174.
[17] Sharalyn Orbaugh, "Kamishibai and the Art of the Interval," 78–100.

performance in the courtyard of Senkōji, a Buddhist temple in Osaka, Japan) can hijack the narrative, retarding the progression between panels, using the overlap of the previous panel and the next to hide or emphasize painted elements or to completely stop the narrative flow to banter with the audience or tell a joke.

The interval is not a mere oversight or liability in *kamishibai* picture-storytelling, but is the temporal site in which narrative is made in the moment via the interaction between image, performer, and audience member. At Senkōji in Osaka in the summer of 2014, I watched as the performer explained with animated gesture and emphatic voice the picture-story of *Niji ni Natta Kitsune* (*The Fox Who Became a Rainbow*), in which the fox Gorozaemon turns himself into a rainbow to help an old man. Sometimes, as the performer switched between panels, she would leave the top panel covering part of the next one, to help the children focus on the character or event on one side of the next picture before revealing the other side. And in anticipation, agitated by this pause, the children would shout out what they thought would be underneath the edge of the last panel, predicting the flow of the narrative. Sometimes the children guessed correctly, and sometimes they were surprised, but what interested me was the way in which the children's active participation allowed them to weave their own stories, and act as their own storytellers. They listened to the speaker, looked at the pictures, and drafted their own version of the story, step-by-step, based on the information already presented. In the interval, the viewer mentally compensates through memory and prediction (perhaps aided by the performer's voice and bodily gesture) to fill the visual gap. And this is often encouraged by solicitations from the performer: "what will the hero do next?"

Orbaugh asserts the performative disruption of image in *kamishibai* performance

to be a challenge to Cartesian Perspectivalism in which rational scientific categories of understanding and the overall stability of the individual as autonomous and separate from their environment is disrupted. Image can be penetrated by voice and bodily gesture, and this penetration can interfere with the individual's mental processing of the picture-story, thus rendering the self and environment as fluid and connected. And the effect of this perspectival disruption is the activation of critical subjectivity in the viewer. But in *Kurama Ko-Tengu,* intervention is not just an attribute of performance; it is a visual and narrative theme in the picture-story itself. The protagonist inserts himself into the conflict between Shinsengumi and peasant and otherwise works to undermine the Shinsengumi's authority and interrupt their plans over the progression of volumes. Similarly, in real time, performer and participant use intervention to revise narrative and question traditional understanding. There is a potential for runaway narratives that take on new meaning through performance and individual reception. By facilitating the critical dismantling of events presented to the viewer, this particular picture-story privileges anarchy and outburst. In terms of image, message, and the way it granted a public forum to volatile and creative orators, commercial *kamsihibai* was a frustration to be mitigated through regulation by national policymakers in postwar Japan.

On August 11, 1950, Osaka Ordinance No. 67 entered into effect (and remained so until its repeal in 1973), which mandated licensing and standards for the professional practice of *kamishibai*. *Kamishibai* as a performance is described as either the explanation (*setsumei,* 説明) or oral presentation (*kōen,* 口演, which denotes creative performance rather than the mere relaying of information) of paintings, photos, or puppet dramas. The ordinance identifies the potential for each, seemingly, to get at the variation

between “educational” (often, propagandist) versus creative, for-profit types of the medium. The expressed purpose of this ordinance (in Article 1) is to tighten regulations for the performance of *kamishibai* in order to protect child welfare (*jidō fukushi,* 児童福祉*),* but this can be interpreted to mean physical welfare (health and safety) as much as psychological welfare, considering the didactic nature of *kamishibai* performance. Further, while rules on health and safety may seem objective and obvious to most individuals (ensuring that the snacks sold are safe, and that attending the performance will not somehow result in bodily harm), what constitutes “foundations in common sense” (*Kaname-na kiso jōshiki* 要な基礎常識) is less clear-cut.

Poised to degrade body and mind, both story and its entertainment medium perhaps present a potential threat to child welfare and “foundations in common sense.” *Kurama Ko-Tengu* is indeed pervaded by scenes of danger, cruel humor, and anarchy, and its viewing would have included the consumption of some (likely homemade) sweets purchased from the performer. The protagonist serves as a nuisance who intervenes in official efforts for control and order. A fidgety, volatile, yet keen force for nothing but his own cause, he is a liability in the public sphere. And I offer that the itinerant performers of *gaitō kamishibai* filled a similar niche in the minds of lawmakers, threatening to unravel efforts of national order by encouraging critical subjectivity and outburst in a public context. Based in the intervention and manipulation of narratives, the *kamishibai* performer is indeed like a rogue virus that infects traditional stories and wreaks havoc with subjectivity in the mind of the viewer. Just as Kurama Ko-Tengu inserts himself into the fray at opportune moments, the *kamishibai* performer similarly sets up camp and interrupts the daily rhythm of spaces where maximum attendance is assured. Performing

the role of detective, pointing to particularly salient elements of image and stretching out key moments of the narrative for the viewer, the *kamishibai* performer infects, via disruption, the otherwise automatic progressions of social exchange, labor, and play in the public sphere. And he morphs the viewer into an active participant, accomplice, or aggressor even, mutating the experience into something recognized as potentially abnormal, especially in comparison with the highly controlled, formulaic versions of *kamishibai* used for education and propaganda discussed by Orbaugh.

The regulation and requirement of licensing is something that also happens in the *benshi* (弁士, "lecturer," or "rhetorician") tradition in Japan, where a live performer relays filmic narrative and performs character voices adjacent to the film screen in the time before talking pictures, a commonality that allows *kamishibai* to be situated within a larger realm of popular performance (and national discourse regarding such performance) in modern Japan. Popular for roughly the first two decades of the Twentieth Century, *benshi* initially had a fair amount of autonomy in their oral recitation and were viewed as creative artists, which made them celebrities in the public sphere. Not merely an accessory to the moving pictures of silent film, they were revered for their ability to manipulate the audience's reception of the film, and even function as a spectacle in their own right. In later years, however, the institutionalization of *benshi* practice realized through a standard licensing program rendered the *benshi* more similar to primary school teachers than creative performers in that they were now tested on mandatory knowledge of historical and cultural trivia—preapproved elements to be regurgitated during performance, rather than original improvisation and stage presence. Morphing from actor to educator, their skill set migrated from the realm of ephemeral improvisation to

previously acquired knowledge, rendering performance automatic and uncreative.[18]

It seems that here too the combination of creativity with didactic license is cause for concern on the part of the Japanese government. And I argue that this concern has to do with the performed role of the rhetorician (in both *benshi* and *kamishibai* performance) as a "detective," who along with the subjective viewer unpacks visual and narrative form through critical investigation. In "Narrating the Detective: *Nansensu*, Silent Film *Benshi* Performances and Tokugawa Musei's Absurdist Detective Fiction" Kyōko Ōmori shows how one of the most famous *benshi* performers of all time, Tokugawa Musei, integrates the nonsensical style of *benshi* cinematic commentary into his literary work in detective fiction, upsetting the usual boundaries between modes of creative production and challenging notions of modern entertainment consumption.[19] "The drastic modernization of the 1920s–30s in Japan prompted literary works that attempted to go beyond realism in portraying the conditions of modernity," Ōmori claims, and "*nansensu* [nonsense], which could encompass both thematic innovation and formal experimentation [in *benshi* improvisation as much as the perimeters of realist fiction], was one way of addressing the unevenness of the changes through which [moderns] were living."[20] The *benshi* performer-turned-realist detective fiction writer openly questioned in a variety of venues the static concepts of the self as separate from society and

[18] In Hideaki Fujiki's "Benshi as Stars: The Irony of the Popularity and Respectability of Voice Performers in Japanese Cinema," *Cinema Journal* 45, No. 2 (Winter 2006): pp. 68-84, Fujiki situates her article within a conversation already taking place between two schools of thought on the historical place of *benshi*: the first led by Noel Burch and Joseph L. Anderson, who "essentialize the *benshi's* performances by describing them as a distinctive trait of Japanese cinema," and the second led by Aaron Gerow and Jeffrey A. Dym, who "shed light on how the *benshi*'s performance and social position changed in their historical context," 69. As mere expositor or original creator of ideas, the *benshi* was paradoxically viewed as both celebrity artist and mere presenter of cinematic art proper.
[19] *Japan Forum* 21, No. 1 (2009): 75–93.
[20] Hideaki Fujiki, "Benshi as Stars," 75–76.

environment and of literary genres as distinct and separate.[21] He thus adapted his approach to oral performance as a *benshi* as a device to use in his detective fiction writing. Specifically appropriating aspects of *benshi* narration like *maesetsumei*, (introductory remarks), *nakasetsumei* (parallel narration and running commentary), and *mandan* (comic chat), he used such devices to interrupt the flow of narrative and unravel the genre itself. Musei reveals genres and types of creative production to be permeable and unstable and confuses fictional detective (the character who usually interjects with such remarks) with *benshi* performer.

Ōmori pokes holes in the façade that maintains creative production as separate from "real life," similar to how the performer in *kamishibai* chips away at painterly compositions, contained by their panel format, to unhinge the gate between the viewer's space and that of the narrative. In Ōmori's fiction these effects are the result of integration and reappropriation from one form of creative production to another, from performance to fiction. Here, narrative structure in the novel takes cues from live performance, and fiction approximates in surrealist fashion the ephemeral experience of watching the *benshi*. In *Kurama Ko-Tengu* the same thing happens as viewer perspective embodies that of the protagonist, and the comic hero enacts his comical disruptions, like the *kamishibai* performer himself. In both Ōmori's *benshi*-reminiscent detective fiction and the live performance of the *Kurama Ko-Tengu* picture-story the detective persona plays host to concepts of investigation, criticality, and upset. Uninhibited by the boundaries of creative production, art and life exist in contingency.

Nansensu for the *benshi*-author and his contemporaries was not merely an attack on contemporary forms of entertainment; it was an intellectual exercise, and a challenge

[21] Ibid., 76.

to which the viewer (in *benshi*) or reader (in detective fiction) would hopefully rise. *Shinseinen*, which published Musei's detective stories, asserted that "*nansensu* provides readers with the opportunity to decode or discern the satirical messages that are implied but not expressed in a straightforward manner."[22] *Nansensu*, a conceptual, absurdist, even avant garde tool, chips away at the façade of realism and energizes original thought by transcending logical connections or categories. And I offer that *kamishibai,* via its constant interventions of performance into image, of spectacle into the realm of daily life, and of viewer into performance, works in much the same way. As a populist form of entertainment, it privileges the practical exercise of modern democratic subjectivity in connection with a specialized style of performance. Challenging preestablished notions of "common sense" as the Osaka ordinance identifies, the *kamishibai* performer solicits playful outburst, in effect, "nonsense," similar to the *benshi* Musei and his detective fiction.

Performance in *kamishibai* is characterized by creative intervention and disruption, and in *Kurama Ko-Tengu* the fictional hero aptly echoes the performer's tendency for disruption and shock in his own fictional public sphere, specifically, through devices of trickery. After fighting in traditional samurai fashion with his sword (Volumes 1 and 2), *Kurama Ko-Tengu* pulls a pistol on the Shinsengumi, frightening them away and ending the skirmish. This is an interestingly abrupt gesture on the part of both panel artist and his painted hero that perhaps violates the honor code of the fictional *jidaigeki* hero, who almost always fights with a sword even if his enemy has a gun. It ruptures the timelessness of this historical drama-style narrative by bringing it into a decidedly

[22] Ōmori, page 82, translating Ōya Sōichi's 'Bungaku no jidai-teki hitsuzen-sei' (The necessary conditions of literature vary as time passes), *Bungaku jidai* 2, No. 1 (1930): 14–18.

modern technological period, and even undermines the appeal of the hero himself, as it functions as a cheat or trump card to end the fight. Even in Kurosawa's *Yōjinbō,* a gun is associated with corruption and underhandedness, traditionally kept separate from the moral hero. In the film's iconic battle scene where the hero faces his opponent Unosuke (Tatsuya Nakadai), both figures stride toward each other with directness and resolve, but instead of reaching for his sword Unosuke pulls a pistol from the breast of his *hakama,* and directs it at the protagonist with spiteful enjoyment. In this scene the hero, undeterred by the gun, calmly and powerfully (despite his childlike antics in other scenes) extends his fists out the holes of his sleeves where he usually holds them in calm, confident repose and meets his opponent in battle head-on with his sword. But *Kurama Ko-Tengu* is not a hero constrained by such a code of ethics, nor by the confines of the *jidaigeki* narrative genre of traditional Japanese samurai heroes; he never meets his opponents head-on.

Further, Kurama Ko-Tengu in this *kamishibai* uses the gun as a device of trickery, not to win the battle by actually shooting his opponents, to undermine expectations from both the viewer and his enemies in the narrative. We see at the end of Volume 2 when the hero turns the gun on his goofy sidekick that it is actually just a water gun, a toy, and that his cunning move that scared away the attackers was a mere bluff. He squirts the water in his sidekick's face, and the sidekick's mixed facial expression of entertainment, awe, and exasperation would likely be accompanied by outbursts of bewildered laughter from viewers when the story was performed. Kurama Ko-Tengu's rose-colored cheeks, salty insults, and pranks align him with an almost Vaudevillian style of performative comedy, with its reliance on physical humor and props. In Volume 7 the hero rudely wakes his

sidekick from his drug-induced sleep with a bucket of cold water that shocks and animates the lanky sidekick in a pantomimic, humorous way. His tactics are awkward, funny, and questionable at times, but always lead to victory over the bumbling arm of the feudal *bakufu.* His unexpected tricks occasionally leave the viewer bewildered and forced to confront the limits of their own morality, when the hero behaves unheroically, in direct affront to the *jidaigeki* canon.

Kurama Ko-Tengu is a subversive trickster who uses shock and humor, often to undermine (corrupt) civic authority and jostle preconceived categories of moral understanding. In both his continual disruption of narrative flow and viewer expectations, and his visual appearance as small, oddly childlike, yet conniving and fearsome—he is not statuesque and severe like the actor who plays Kurama Tengu in the silent film, nor does he imploy the intimidating swagger popularized by Toshiro Mifune. But the *kamishibai* character does fit well into a global theatrical role played by comical, trickster characters in carnival and theater, who generate what Susan Stewart terms the "symbolic inversion" of, or an intervention in, customary viewing.[23] The trickster (like Kurama Ko-Tengu) is "a spirit of creativity, a refuser of rigid systems," Stewart says, who appears in a wealth of cross-cultural examples.[24] The trickster brings wreckage and disruption, but also positive change and eventual improvement to society (Kurama Ko-Tengu, for example, frightens and shocks, but also restores autonomy and safety to the downtrodden). In this "space occupied by the other, the space of dialogue," Stewart says, speaking to the place of the grotesque figure in the public sphere, roles are unspecialized, hierarchy is overturned, and "the performer must engage with face-to-face

[23] Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1984).
[24] Ibid., 106.

communication with the audience."[25] Like Kurama Ko-Tengu who hurls himself into the fray, the *kamishibaiya* inserts himself into public life and invites viewers to break down the distance between him and them. Confronted by the grotesque, the liminal, and the confusing, the individual engages the subject in democratic reciprocity.

The unexpected or abnormal appearance of the character disrupts narrative flow by undermining viewer expectations, like Kurama Ko-Tengu, whose stature does not coincide with the usual depictions of tall, strong samurai heroes in Japanese literature and visual culture. The hero's smallness and willingness to use unsavory gimmicks that rupture the concept of the historical hero allow him to intervene in the usual viewing or consumption process: a "trick" on the viewer to-be-countered with mental agility. In particular, Kurama Ko-Tengu dismantles the traditional representation of the body through verticality (he is half the height of his foes), a trope often found in the bodily representations of the miniature and grotesque, Stewart says. Stewart points out that the phenomena of the grotesque trickster in entertainment historically function (in the European tradition, anyway) as a "mechanism for change and revolution, and as [a] 'safety valve' for an otherwise turbulent populace."[26] Linked to a Renaissance culture of the carnival grotesque, the trickster for Stewart belongs to a "'second life' of the masses, a life of antiorder and vernacular authority as opposed to the official doctrines of religious and state institution."[27] Kurama Ko-Tengu's trickster persona in this *kamishibai* holds significant interest in this context, for he is both depicted as trickster who sews disorder and causes confusion in his narrative realm. But as a visual element in *kamishibai* performance, his depicted gestures of insurrection aptly mirror that which the

[25] Ibid., 107.
[26] Ibid., 106.
[27] Ibid., 106.

kamishibai performer solicits from his audience who challenges narrative and banters with the performer. As an ephemeral sideshow to the course of daily life, *kamishibai* provides a momentary distraction akin to carnival spectacle.[28] And in this particular *kamishibai* the trickster hero provides even further resonance with the carnival and its grotesque figures. But Stewart also points out that such festivities surrounding the grotesque trickster have a history of being taken up as symbols of revolution in times of class conflict.[29] This happens when "[t]he [grotesque] body is paraded, put on display, in time as well as in space…" in a context that allows "little or no division between participants and audience."[30] In this way the grotesque is "apprehended," Stewart's word, in what Phillip Fisher calls the "democratic space" of lateral viewing, parallel and in immediate proximity to the viewer in their own space. The trickster, the grotesque figure, confronts the viewer on equal footing in this latter scenario, soliciting interaction and critical appraisal, even as (s)he serves as a subject of viewing entertainment. The realm of the trickster character in entertainment, in other words, fosters a space for the working-through of newly disturbed ideas concerning identity and politics, on the part of performer and viewer alike. In this arena where boundaries fall apart (and can be moved and replaced in the mind of the viewer) radical changes in subjectivity can occur. And *kamishibai* like those grotesque spectacles of the carnival similarly functioned as a spectacle of oddity against which individuals could evaluate their own notions (and

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[28] Scholars of *kamishibai* such as Sharalyn Orbaugh, but also others of similar historical modes of picture-storytelling throughout Asia have pointed out the similarity between *kamshibai* and other modern forms of street theater in Japan that took place within the context of the carnival, or *misemono*, such as *nozoki megane* (覗き眼鏡, "peeping spectacles," or the peep-box). In *nozoki megane* a passing attendee of the carnival would be solicited to look through an optical device, into a panoramic box with a painted or printed composition. A live orator standing next to the peep-box would then explain the composition to the viewer. See Maki Fukuoka, "Contextualising the Peep-Box in Tokugawa Japan," *Early Popular Visual Culture* 3, No. 1 (May 2005).

[29] Stewart, *On Longing*, 106–07.

[30] Ibid., 107.

frustrations) of changing modernity in postwar Japan.

It is not just the comical, grotesque protagonist in this *kamishibai*, but the medium's overall structure that disturbs. *Kamishibai* exhibits a Modernist impulse similar to much of twentieth-century performance art to disturb boundaries between creative mediums (specifically painting and performance) and spatial or temporal categories of understanding (by bringing the far-off near to the viewer, and the long-ago into the present moment). Arthur C. Danto explains how twentieth-century performance art (and other forms of Modernist art) seeks to call into question the boundaries between art, its philosophy, and life by existing on the edge of the previously-conceived limits of art as something "marked by a curious ephemerality and indefinition."[31] Via the confusion of boundaries of understanding, the rejection of distance between image and its tangible referent, Modernist performance art can achieve a transformation of the rules of viewing. As the *kamishibai* performer solicits narrative predictions from the audience, allowing them to become narrative specialists and even embody the moral framework of story and protagonist, I argue, a slippage similar to that identified by Danto in Modernist performance art—between viewer, performer, and elements of the picture-story—occurs. The "trick," as it were, is the implication of the viewer as protagonist and as performer, that they are thoroughly enmeshed in the tangled web of visual-literary life.

In this *kamishibai* the protagonist Kurama Ko-Tengu fills two roles: detective and vigilante enforcer, although the latter sometimes seems a coincidental byproduct of his comical, anarchist stunts that, more than anything, make the Shinsengumi look a fool, thus undermining authority. The viewer is then left to realize for him or herself the

[31] Arthur Danto, "Art and Disturbation," *Formations* (Winter 1985). See the essay's reprinting as a chapter of Danto's book *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 119.

relative merits and faults of the hero's actions as both protagonist and villains alike are examined in the judicial arena presided over by the viewer-participant. But via the interactivity of the medium, the viewer is also implicated in the transgressions carried out by the hero, as his embodied gaze, in a wonderful rupture of Cartesian perspectivalism, as Sharalyn Orbauh says. *Kurama Ko-Tengu* illuminates social injustices and patterns in human behavior, revealing them to the audience, through painterly composition and live recitation. This is the aggressive, didactic aspect of *kamishibai* that relays narrative and meaning "as they are" to the viewer, prefabricated and continuous. But through consistent disruption (of image viewing by the performer's gestures or voice, of viewer expectations through shock and unforeseen actions on the part of the main character, and in general, of the quotidian rhythm of public life by the popular performance) *kamishibai* undermines its own materiality and conceptual authority, thus poking holes in the façade of the boundedness of art from life, of fiction and "reality." The character Kurama Ko-Tengu delights in upsetting proceedings as usual, those traditional expectations that render public life static and oppressive. And in this, despite his historical setting, he is a figure of modernity who privileges change and the reshuffling of categories of understanding. In his role as detective, he inspires a process of critical investigation in the viewer, but does not allows the viewer to remain static, surveying from a distance. Instead, via the hero's example, and the integrated, interactive nature of *kamishibai,* the individual remains just that: autonomous in his or her subjectivity, but thoroughly enmeshed in the issues of changing narratives and understandings that characterize modernity. Stewart places the carnival experience (where the grotesque figure mingles with the populace) in contrast to that of the spectacle, where the viewer is "absolutely aware of the distance between the

self and spectacle."[32] The spectacle is *outside* (the viewer and his or her immediate space) at all times and viewed with a directional gaze, whereas the carnival transgresses boundaries of the self through intermingling and inclusion, and harnesses a reciprocal ("democratic") gaze. And this latter space, characterized by confusion and criticality, is where both Kurama Ko-Tengu and his *kamishibai* medium reside.

[32] Stewart, *On Longing*, 108.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STORIES WE ARE TOLD, THE STORIES WE TELL OURSELVES: *ABARENBŌ SAZEN, JIDAIGEKI,* TRAUMA, AND MEMORY

Like the protagonist of the *kamishibai* picture-story *Kurama Ko-Tengu* that was analyzed in Chapter One, the protagonist in Yamamoto Gohare (山本梧晴) and Sado Masashi's (佐渡 正士) *Abarenbō Sazen* (暴れん坊左膳, *Rowdy Sazen*, created after 1947, Osaka International Children's Literature Collection), which was also created for the postwar Osaka circle known as San'yūkai, is a rogue samurai warrior, a *rōnin*.[33] Tange Sazen is a *jidaigeki*-style protagonist who first appeared in a serialized newspaper novel in 1927 and numerous film adaptations in 1928, 1935, 1960, 1966, and most recently in 2004. *Jidaigeki* (時代劇, costume drama or period drama) is not a genre born in postwar Japan, but it certainly found popularity and an overwhelming rate of consumption, as evidenced by the many filmic iterations of Tange Sazen's story that debuted in the years following the Allied Occupation, and by the success of Kurosawa Akira's *jidaigeki* films from around the same time. During this time the economy, starting at a point of extreme depression at the end of the war, saw drastic improvement, and discretionary income increased as a result, allowing for such consumption. And starting in 1952 with the end of the Allied Occupation, the volume of entertainment

[33] For images see the Osaka International Children's Library Website: http://www.library.pref.osaka.jp/central/kamishibai/hb0002n/0001/hb0002n_0001.html.

available for consumption increased exponentially as SCAP (Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers) lifted bans and censorship, such as those that had kept films like Kurosawa Akira's 1945 *jidaigeki*-style *Tora no o o Fumu Otokotachi* (虎の尾を踏む男達, *The Men who Step on the Tiger's Tale*) hidden from the public's eyes. With a newfound freedom of consumption and discretionary income to satiate personal taste, a diaphanous public of individuals patronized the postwar *jidaigeki* current and ensured its propagation.

This chapter unpacks the relationship between the *kamishibai Abarenbō Sazen* and the *jidaigeki* genre that transcends any single medium of popular entertainment in the postwar period to show how it invokes and negotiates this popular style of storytelling. Specifically, it exemplifies how *jidaigeki* can spark the examination of traumatic histories from a modern standpoint and speak to modern concerns through the device of temporal displacement of the setting. Demonstrative of the rather considerable collection of *jidaigeki*-inspired narratives in the *oeuvre* of San'yūkai, where such stories comprise approximately one-third of the total holdings in the Osaka International Children's Literature Collection produced for the circle, *Abarenbō Sazen* participates in this genre of historical drama that found iteration in not just *kamishibai,* but film, serial literature, and *manga* in postwar Japan. The story of Tange Sazen (broadly speaking) is one that thematically privileges the trauma of loss, compounded in memory and embodied by the visibly scarred figure of the hero. The hero copes with the respective emotional and physical pain of being wounded while protecting his feudal lord, then abandoned for dead by the same, by seeking revenge on this and other feudal lords—interrupting their journeys, stealing their goods, and otherwise making fools of them—through acts of

vigilante justice. Variously depicted as an isolated and vagrant figure no longer bound to a feudal house, as a sword for hire, or as a vigilante for personal justice, the *rōnin* hero navigates his posttrauma world largely alone. In his rejection by/of nucleic society, in his identification with the adverse landscape that serves as a setting for transformation through hardship, his private negotiation of memory and trauma, and his eventual return to civilization as a shaker of oppressive powers, Tange Sazen shares much with the heroes of *jidaigeki* film.

The San'yūkai version of the popular fictional hero's story does veer somewhat off canon with its comparatively lighter tone and its depiction of Tange Sazen as troublesome, reckless, and juvenile, although there is one precedent for the more petty depiction of the hero in the 1935 film about the character that functions as something of a comedic spoof on the more sober and dramatic 1928 silent film version. This divergence becomes particularly evident when the San'yūkai version is placed in comparison with another *kamishibai* concerning the same fictional protagonist now in Tokyo that signifies the more historical depiction of the hero as reticent and driven primarily by revenge.[34] Instead, *Abarenbō Sazen* lends unexpected quirks to a well-known *jidaigeki*-style hero, morphing him into something at once familiar and unfamiliar, nostalgic and off putting. He invokes viewer memories of previously-viewed *jidaigeki* heroes, but questions and revises them through variation and narrative pastiche to bring the very idea of singular memory and canonic representation into question. In other words, cultural memory plays a prominent role as *Abarenbō Sazen* invokes the larger realm of *jidaigeki* entertainment and stories about Tange Sazen historically told threin. But cultural memory is also shown

[34]高橋 一京 Takahashi Ichikyo, 丹下左膳(宝壷の巻) *Tange Sazen: The Winding of Takaratsubo.* 大空社 Oozorasha (Publisher), 紙芝居大系 *Kamishibai Taikei Collection* (encompasses examples from during and after World War II). Tokyo Metropolitan Library Tama Collection.

to be vulnerable to the particulars of the moment and the whims of memory's creator(s)—that is, the individual.

In what follows, I show that while Tange Sazen is historically depicted as a scarred, broken, yet stubborn hero bent on revenge and informed by a long and weary personal existence, the San'yūkai version foregrounds instead his rather youthful, and immature character traits (magnified further by his association with two rambunctious young boys). Rather than stoic and hardened by pain, time spent in isolated struggle and thoughts of revenge, Tange Sazen is depicted here as quite immature, playful, and even indecorously bumbling (particularly in the first couple of volumes). And like his young cohort, he seems to be a less settled version of the hero, like an adolescent still undergoing the transformation to adulthood. His *raison d'être* is the same—he seeks to undermine and disrupt feudal power, corruption, and greed—but his methods are far more playful, agile, and tricky. In the context of academic discourses on the emergence of individualism and subjectivity that have, since that historical moment, surrounded discussions on postwar Japanese society, this aberrational depiction of Tange Sazen becomes a particularly salient example of how individual subjectivity is articulated, tested, and valued at this time—as something changeable and subject to a continual working-through on the part of the individual. Particularly through the story's invocation and commentary through comedy on a genre that has increasingly moved, as period drama film scholar S.A. Thornton puts it, from subjects of national memory to those of anonymous, unremarkable, or strange characters who negotiate historical settings via their own unique path, *Abarenbō Sazen* gets at the importance of storytelling in the

postwar period.[35] Namely, I assert, it allows for the conception of the self as unique, independent, and solely responsible for personal transformation. The historical drama of *jidaigeki,* conflated with the history of the Japanese nation as understood in the postwar moment becomes a mirror against which this *kamishibai* hero is compared. Correspondingly, individual viewers can evaluate and reorganize their own personal histories, and against the formula of historically transcendent, transformed Japanese heroes, *en route* to envisioning a future characterized by memory yet vindicated from its trauma.

Narrative (Re)iteration, Appropriation, and Negotiation

In San'yūkai's *Abarenbō Sazen* we are not told or shown the hero's origin story (his bodily trauma and subsequent abandonment), though arguably it should be incorporated into our viewing, as the hero possesses the prominent eye scar, missing arm, stubborn scowl, and iconic white *kimono* made popular by actor Denjirō Ōkōchi in the 1935 film. The white robe worn by the hero is the uniform of his former master's household, although he no longer serves that house, and his body, bearing physical scars of trauma silently connotes the back story that the viewer maps on to the current manifestation of the maimed and flawed hero based on other encounters with the hero in popular entertainment.

In Takahashi Ichikyo's (高橋 一京) Tokyo-made *kamishibai* titled *Tange Sazen: Takaratsubo no Makida* (丹下左膳:宝壷の巻, Ōzorasha Publishing, Tokyo Metropolitan Library Tama Collection), the artist brings into question the honor and

[35]S.A. Thornton, *The Japanese Period Film: A Critical Analysis,* (Jefferson, NC: Mc Farland & Company, Inc., 2008).

ethics of the young lord of the Sōma clan whom Tange once served through a sequence in which the lord threatens Tange by angrily and rashly bringing the hilt of his sword to the throat of his sworn servant during a discussion. When Tange is attacked during a mission for his lord and left for dead, he undergoes a painful transformation from lorded *samurai* to masterless *rōnin,* learning to cope with the loss of eye and limb as much as the lost part of his identity as a servant to a feudal household. He then becomes a vigilante against feudal power, targeting in particular his former lord. In various cinematic versions, this attack comes from the Sōma clan directly, as punishment for Tange's supposed betrayal. But more integral to the canon's different narrative reasons for why Tange is scarred and severed from his place of servitude are the memories of trauma themselves. Tange's anger at abandonment and eventual resolve to transform his personal character become a starting point for the hero's lone psychological journey forward.

There are two major themes that are communicated visually in both the San'yūkai and Tokyo versions of this *kamishibai* that work to characterize the hero, speaking specifically to traumatic memory, and the pain of past transformation that the hero endures. One is the literal scarring and fragmentation of the hero's body that tells of the physical trauma endured at the moment he was severed from the Sōma clan, which I discuss here. And the second is the space in which the hero negotiates this trauma and takes action to claim his memory as his own (rather than something inflicted on him by someone else): the inhospitable, adverse landscape. I discuss this second theme in depth later on. The body becomes a vessel for lived traumatic memory and a visible record of that trauma's effects on the current Tange Sazen. The Tokyo *kamishibai* tells Tange's painful history through a sequence of flashbacks. In Volume 5 the hero is depicted

kneeling next to a stream, in the uniform of his master's clan, with a fresh, red gash that runs diagonally down his right eye, cradling his newly-severed right arm with the hand of the other. He sheds his garment to wash himself and we see, through his mind's eye as he stares laterally across the panel composition, the figure of his formal feudal lord appears in a halo of yellow as he painfully recalls his master. Bodily injury, here, is the catalyst for the review of memory. And memory opens like a gaping wound in pictorial space. It is through this flashback that we learn of the young lord's propensity to lose control of his anger and threaten his subordinates, and this initial betrayal, compounded with that of Tange's current injured state, serves to convict the feudal lord of selfishness and power abuse before the viewer.

As I later discuss, drawing on the writing of S.A. Thornton, *jidaigeki* narratives typically offer a critique of the present, couched within a setting of temporal displacement. That is, while the historical setting and period costumes depicted distance the conflict therein and allow for apparently retrospective analysis, *jidaigeki* often, in actuality, resonates with current sentiments and concerns. And I offer that postwar iterations of Tange Sazen's story are no different. The stalwart persistence of the *jidaigeki* hero's body—fragmentary and scarred—that functions as a vessel for traumatic memory, in this *kamishibai* is, for example, a rather sober reminder of the wealth of writings by those who survived the atomic bombs that destroyed Nagasaki and Hiroshima in 1945, in which the fragmentary body persists as a symbol of trauma. In her book *Japan's Cold War: Media, Literature, and the Law* (2009) Ann Sherif explains the important impact of Hara Tamiki's writing on the postwar canon of *hibakusha* (被爆者, atomic bomb survivors) writing on a circle of both amateur and professional authors who

fostered a group antinuclear consciousness.[36] For both Sherif and this school of *hibakusha* writers, the significance of Hara's writing lies in his ability to communicate the horrors of nuclear weapons to younger generations, in his ability to empathetically convey historical narrative. And the Tokyo version of Tange Sazen in particular shows how *jidaigeki,* as a genre concerned with historical memory, provides a similar opportunity for the (re)telling of trauma narratives. Specifically, this picture-story emphasizes the importance of memory through the protagonist's flashback in the Tokyo version, and the persistence of his scarred body in any and all iterations of the hero's story.

Some of Hara's postwar writings, such as "Ice Flowers," have historically been understood as victimizing Japanese society. However, Sherif points out that critic Nogami Gen attempts to reframe the novella as a "report from the battlefront."[37] Situating Hara's writing within an already well-known genre of firsthand accounts of soldiers at war, Nogami asserts that Hara works to embattle Japanese at the precipice of the Cold War, rather than merely lament wartime destruction in a time of recovery. In other words, Hara's account can be interpreted as not merely a mourning of loss, but a recalibration of the self in preparation for present and future encounters with challenges. While this story of Tange Sazen indeed shows the hero lamenting his abandonment and bodily trauma, memory also serves as a catalyst for personal action and progress, just as Nogami asserts Hara's writing has the potential to do. Nogami predicates his argument on Hara's personal circumstances; while he still had family and property in Hiroshima that indeed

[36] Ann Sherif, *Japan's Cold War: Media, Literature, and the Law*, New York: Columbia University Press (2009), 90–91.
[37] Nogami Gen, "Hara Tamiki igo: Aruiwa, 'media' to shite genshi bakudan o kangaeru koto no (fu)kanōsei." *Gendai shisō* (August 2003): 104. Discussed in Sherif, 107.

tie him to memories of war and trauma, he departed Hiroshima for Tokyo (like many *hibakusha* who sought to escape the ruins of the A-bombed Hiroshima or Nagasaki). Alienated and struggling in Tokyo, the site of the Japanese vanguard for social change, the writer had to use introductions from friends and colleagues in order to just find rooms to rent and survive. In other words, Hara opted for self-exile and hardship away from his home, which Nogami takes as evidence that he indeed had a stake in future change. As a writer whose suicide sometimes overshadows the legacy of his writing proper, this allows us to reconsider Hara's efforts and connections to the *hibakusha* community; rather than a mere victim, he is a protestor, and rather than a refugee, he is a fighter. Like the wandering *jidaigeki* hero Tange Sazen, painful memories allow the individual to reach backward in time so as to reclaim trauma through storytelling.

In San'yūkai's version, *Abarenbō Sazen*, when we first see the hero depicted in the sequence of Panel 1-6 (although the missing panel 1-2 could have potentially depicted the hero), it is not with a visage hardened by physical pain and the trauma of memory as we do in the Tokyo *kamshibai.* Instead of depicting him in a state of static repose and stalwart conviction—it seems, in the Tokyo *kamishibai* that Tange has already decided on the meaning of these memories—the artist of *Abarenbō Sazen* depicts him midmovement, in an awkward and in-between moment, midleap (or stumble). And his bodily state in flux, here, resists the viewer's reading of the hero as firmly set in character or values, in contrast to the stoic depiction of the hero in the Tokyo version. The fabric of his garment flutters up toward the top of his thighs with the motion of his body, one knee jutting out to the left, his upper body dodging in the same direction as if to avoid the paper screens, household objects, and the figure of a young boy that fly toward him from

the background; this is neither a static nor dignified depiction of the hero. It is as if he is completely unconcerned with performing stoicism for the gaze of a viewer, whereas the Tokyo version shows him kneeled in pained repose with frontal arrangement that assumes a viewer. The figure of Tange Sazen keeps his eyes locked on incoming projectiles in this frozen moment of complete chaos. Fully immersed in the mayhem of the moment, he considers only his own body, his own quickly shifting circumstances.

The comical and awkward pandemonium depicted in this panel is the effect of a friendly scuffle between two young boys, close cohorts of the protagonist with whom he is often depicted in subsequent volumes, characters who emphasize the childlike qualities of Tange Sazen himself. The protagonist becomes entangled in their mischief in this first volume, and they in his, in later volumes. In panel 1-4 the two figures burst through the paper screens of one man's home, their bodies spiraling like cannonballs through the thin material. And one boy's bodily momentum continues into another domestic space where Tange Sazen resides. The boys generate paths of destruction that unite the street in comic turmoil. In Volume 2, an aerial perspective of the town, its wooden buildings and dirt streets forming an idealized geometric field punctuated by hardworking figures going about their daily tasks, precedes a recapitulation of the play-turned-scuffle that caused so much upset in the first volume (panels 2-2 to 2-10). The boys' mischief comes as a disruption to the order of daily life.

Tange Sazen, far from showing annoyance at their games, shares in their responsibility for the destruction (panel 2-7) and walks them home (2-8). Tange displays a flexibility here, a willingness to go along with whatever challenges present themselves, similar to the protagonist at the beginning of Kurosawa's film *Yōjinbō* (用心棒, 1961)

who, coming to the intersection of several country roads in the otherwise wild landscape and eying a stick on the ground there, throws it into the air with childlike flare, watches it fall back to the ground, and follows the road in the direction that it points to continue his journey. The hero's seeming aimlessness, or rather, his lack of a hurry to find "civilization," and his leaving the path of his journey to chance and the implements of nature, designates him as something of a wild vagrant, but one who is unthreatened by the adversity of the natural world. In panel 2-8 the three figures—the protagonist in the middle, and the two boys who use crutches and wear bandages, signs of injury incurred through mischief-making—appear as three of a kind, each of their garments loose and askew, each of them displaying wounds (although Tange's are far older and more severe). Tange Sazen's lost arm and eye are downplayed as the result of childlike play and the personal lessons learned from it. He, like the children, is still in a state of personal growth and transformation, and his bodily trauma commemorates personal experience.

This is not to say that the hero's history of bodily trauma is sublimated in this version of the story; to the contrary, it is a key visual cue that evokes a history and helps the viewer to understand his actions. Tange Sazen's occupation as a *samurai* detective and occasional sword for hire comes with the threat of harm, and even death. He has made an enemy of the local feudal lord, who seeks to kill him. The final panel of Volume 2 depicts a black-garbed *ninja* assassin crawling in the rafters above Tange Sazen and his associate, in advance of carrying out his plot to kill. And in panel 3-9 an unseen assassin only known to the viewer by the hand that clutches a pistol in the shadows stands poised to kill Tange Sazen who is flanked by his two young friends as they walk through the street. In the next panel we see Tange Sazen's body falling to the ground with the shot, as

he twists to grab at the two children and force them down as well. In the next volume we see the boys trying to rouse the unresponsive hero in the aftermath, as cloaked *ninja* close in on the boys. The two draw wooden weapons—their crutches on which they leaned in the previous volume—with heroic resolve to defend their friend. But then the cunning hero who only pretended to have been shot (ostensibly having secretly noticed the marksman) catches the assaulters off guard and successfully fights them off, saving himself and the boys. The hero eyes the assaulters wearily over his shoulder as they run off (panel 5-3), but the boys stand in confidence at the victory in the next panel, back-to-back with each other, one kneeling and the other standing, a wooden crutch-turned-*bō* staff balanced casually on the standing boy's shoulder, a comic scene suggesting that they believe that they were the true saviors in this fight. And in the following panel 5-5 the boys mirror in figural arrangement the confident stride of the protagonist. As villagers part for the samurai detective, gawking in awe, the boys stride immediately behind him in the left background, performing the role of successful hero by modelling his posture. Just as play gave way to fighting for the children in the first volume, here, true danger and violence are met with enjoyment, as battle conversely becomes a playful fantasy of heroic feat. This real danger is met with the gaze of youthful excitement, and as the two young boys experiment to find their own subjectivities by often trying on Tange's for size, we see that this *jidaigeki* hero, like others viewed in postwar entertainment, serves as one model, or mirror, for the working-out of identity. The two boys, like the viewers of this *kamishibai,* formulate personal identity in reference to the actions and appearance of the *jidaigeki* hero.

Memory, Trauma, and the Development of Subjectivity in the Postwar Moment

Sazen's figural depiction in this *kamishibai* tells of traumatic memory, violent battles, and the grating wear of time on the hero. But his occasional light-hearted reactions (as when the children tumble through the wall of his house) and helter-skelter appearance (his kimono is not tautly wrapped, but baggy, and coming undone) suggest that a juvenile spirit lies beneath the angry visage, and this is further confirmed by his preferred choice to associate with children. They not only learn through contact with him, but he through contact with them, in contrast to his more sober, and staunchly-set personal in the Tokyo *kamishibai* version. He identifies with their penchant for experiment and adventure, their active readiness to jump in to a skirmish, and their desire to learn and grow through experience.

In the volume of the Tokyo *kamishibai* discussed earlier, Tange Sazen's flashback, the visual narrative that he relays for himself and the audience within the parameters of the *kamishibai* picture-story occupies more panels than his actual revenge, and many of these panels depict static scenes where we can contemplate the character of both the selfish young lord and the stubbornly-resilient hero. Indeed, the mere act of telling his story (and having lived long enough to do so because he braved the wild landscape), rather than the exacting of revenge, seems to be his most important function as a hero in this narrative. The negotiation of memory here relates directly to the protagonist's status as hero; it provides a reason to fight, a reason to keep going. And while this is a story of historical fiction, the formative role that memory plays in fashioning identity resonates in theme with fiction beyond *jidaigeki* proper in the postwar moment. But I offer that while this *kamsihibai* echoes a national propensity to characterize the self through memory and

reflection, it also privileges the uniqueness of the individual and their particular experience, and it does not take for granted the direct correlation between the individual and the nation; memory here is personal.

Namiko Kunimoto in her 2013 article, "Tanaka Atsuko's Electric Dress and the Circuits of Subjectivity," discusses the high circulation of terms like *shutaisei* (subjectivity) and *shukan* (the subject) in postwar Japan, as part of Marxist discourse led by the Communist Party.[38] Such terms indeed helped to fashion a future model for the postwar the social subject, plotted as part of a longer history of development. But the term "subjectivity" also denoted a separate notion of Japanese existentialism tied to a Kierkegaardian leap of faith, "or, alternatively… an individualistic ethos that was based on Protestant ethics."[39] Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813–1855) often spoke of the primacy of the single individual and asserted the importance of personal choice made on the basis of lived experience rather than abstract thinking.[40] Concepts of morality and their effects on character and action are left to be sorted out by the individual. Both the Marxist and Kierkegaardian philosophies that circulated in the postwar Japanese public sphere speak to the theme of individual development and transformation that appears in *Abarenbō Sazen*. Kierkegaard places the individual in relation to the institution (the church) in a similar way to how Marxist ideology places individual subjectivity in relation to national politics. Both of these realms of thought speak to a general concern with the individual, who is part of the nation. In this context, the Tange Sazen in the San'yūkai version of the *kamishibai* seems to resonate with contemporary concerns for

[38] Cited in Namiko Kunimoto, "Tanaka Atsuko's Electric Dress and the Circuits of Subjectivity," *Art Bulletin* XCV, No. 3 (September 2013), 469.
[39] Ibid.
[40] See for example his *Edifying Discourses in Diverse Spirits,* (*Opbyggelige Taler i forskjellig Aand*), 1847.

sorting out individual identity. And further, as a picture-story for children, it shows how the act of storytelling informed by the *jidaigeki* canon works to include even the youngest generation in public discourse.

Individual identity negotiated in terms of memory was indeed a primary concern in postwar Japanese discourse, but it certainly did not proceed unhindered by other factors. Sharalyn Orbaugh, along with historian John Dower and many other writers, argues that during the Occupation Japanese collective memory underwent invasive editing, largely due to efforts from the Occupation forces. Her *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation: Vision, Embodiment, Identity* (2007), Orbaugh analyzes how Japanese writers of fiction working during the Allied Occupation (1945–52) contributed to discourses on Japanese identity, "as influenced by the historical circumstances of war, defeat, privation, and occupation by a foreign power."[41] She says that a tangible cognitive dissonance and resulting trauma to Japanese memory in this period was profoundly felt by the population who saw the near-total destruction of all major cities followed by gifts and care given by the very same troops who destroyed those cities; the rupture of imperial imagery as the divine emperor was forced to renounce his title as such and unquestioning loyalty to the empire was forcibly displaced by American-made notions of personal autonomy and democracy. The values and messages of the current occupied Japan displaced those of wartime, and the narratives—told by country, by groups, and by the individual to him (or her)self—of the previous dispensation similarly gave way to new ones. Stories told to oneself about one's past (memory or personal narrative)

[41] Sharalyn Orbaugh, *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation: Vision, Embodiment, Identity* (Boston: Brill Publishers, 2007), 3.

Orbaugh says, are integral to the reconstruction of identity.[42] And the reconstruction of identity through narrative, through memory, "will allow a person to live through the traumatic rupture and into the visible present."[43]

The protagonist in *Abarenbō Sazen*, with his scarred, fragmented body and his continual efforts to negotiate memory through current actions (and to ostensibly bring about social change) certainly mirrors the struggle of individuals in Japan in the postwar moment; the negotiation of lived trauma, existence in an in-between moment *en route* to personal and social change aptly reflects the collective desire to make sense of the present and ensure a viable future by reconciling with the past. But in Tange's divorce from society, his literal abandonment and operation independent of any cohesive structure, allegorical potential here is rather limited. Tange Sazen struggles to reconcile himself with his past and to find his future, not as a member of the Japanese nation but as an individual in Japan. Tange represents the development of the particular and individual self in the postwar moment, not the development of the postwar nation. The lonely place of the hero, as separate from society, is a running theme in much of Kurosawa's *jidaigeki* films as well. "Kuwabatake Sanjurō" (桑畑三十郎, where Kuwabatake translates as "mulberry field," and Sanjurō as "thirty," or "thirtieth," as in familial succession), the protagonist in *Yōjinbō*, gives this made-up alias while staring off into a mulberry field, and we understand that this name is fabricated on the spot. His giving of a made-up name signifies the conceptual distance (in character and experience) between him and the community. And the camera's perspective often draws attention to "Kuwabatake's" exile from humanity when it is placed in close proximity to the main character's body (and

[42] Orbaugh, *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation,* 9.
[43] Ibid.

keeps it in focus) while capturing a blurred crowd of figures in the distance.

Displacement of the individual from his family or cultural roots is also, significantly, a prominent theme in much of Hara's postwar writing. Ann Sherif notes that "along with the literal displacement and wandering caused by the widespread destruction of cities during the war, the sense of lost home and alienation become familiar tropes" in Hara's writing as much as that of other *hibakusha.*[44] Sherif explains (partly from reading Hara's work, and partly in historical synopsis) how people in Tokyo looked coldly on *hibakusha,* as though they were walking corpses who would all starve. Hara's own landlady in Tokyo kept her distance from him and was keen to point out his seemingly odd behavior. For Sherif, Hara's wandering (from Hiroshima to Tokyo, and from place to place once in Tokyo) allows his readers to view him as a figure of universal suffering and displacement.[45] But Sherif herself does not take a stance on whether his wandering connotes exclusively a status as victim or hero. The *jidaigeki* hero, again, resonates with the isolated struggle of victims of wartime trauma in the postwar historical moment.

Such a visible severing of the individual self from the body of the nation, such subjective independence, would have been inconceivable in wartime, as Orbaugh has pointed out. And perhaps the fragmented appearance of Tange's body aptly speaks to the psychological pain of this separation, as the self learns to operate independently of historical constructions of identity once dominated by imperial rhetoric. In Chapter 6 ("National Mobilization: from Nation to *Gunkoku* (a Country at War)") of her book *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation: Vision, Embodiment, Identity*, Orbaugh shows

[44] Ann Sherif, *Japan's Cold War: Media, Literature, and the Law* (New York: Columbia University Press), 108.
[45] Ibid.

that in wartime the visual trope of the infallible, pristine body of the military hero pervaded visual culture. And further, that this infallibility finds depiction through tropes connected to the natural environment—forever bound to the natural world, indeed finding its origins with the Sun Goddess and metaphorical connections with cherry blossoms, wind, and mist, the national hero indeed had an intimate relationship to the natural world, which I later explore as a primary theme in postwar *jidaigeki* where the adverse landscape transforms the hero. But this relationship is articulated in a very different way than the *jidaigeki* hero of postwar *kamishibai.* Animated by the unsullied pure blood of an unbroken heritage from the age of the Sun Goddess, the soldier of the Fifteen Year War belonged to a singular and perfect national body (*kokutai*). Orbaugh shows that wartime lore emphasizing the purity of national lineage were conveyed through the repetition of terms like *sekishin* (literally, "red heart," meaning sincerity) in propaganda, effectively linking the concept of pure blood with a national spirit.[46] And this relationship between blood and the Japanese spirit were further enforced through environmental motifs. When soldiers died in violent battles, it was in an aesthetically-sublime mist or gust of blood, evidence of their nationhood bursting forth. A popular 1937 song about the "war god Hirose" goes:

> Just at that moment it happened" in the ear-splitting noise of the enemy fire, a mist of blood (*chikeburi*) hung over the boat, and the Lieutenant's form could no longer be seen.
>
> Of his five-foot-tall body, only a one-inch lump of fleshed remained—his loyal blood, sacrificial blood, chivalrous blood will be treasured for one thousand eras with no decay.[47]

The hero's body is immortal, that of a war god, and so even in its total dispersal (as

[46] Orbaugh, *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation*, 216.
[47] Translated in Orbaugh, *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation*, 224.

conveyed in these lyrics) it is beautiful and unsullied.[48] The lump of flesh here is so miniscule that it functions more like a relic; it is not a destroyed body, but a sign of greatness and transcendence. And the blood, despite its diffusion in and around the boat, does not disappear. There is no decay, no detriment to the national body in this violent event. Similarly, the military body, light and transcendent as mist in the above song, is also often characterized as "wind," "storm," or "blizzard," Orbaugh says. One need look no further than the well-known title *kamikaze* ("god wind") for pilots, and Orbaugh adds to this list film titles with similar connotation: *Keppū* (Blood Wind) by Nikkatsu, and *Neppū* (Burning wind, 1943) from Tōhō Studios. Such heroes wield the force and ferocity of nature, and then are dispersed, yet live on (in symbolic terms) as immortal: transient mists, winds, and flames.

The protagonist in *Abarenbō Sazen* seems a stubborn affront to wartime conceptions of the hero's body; he is not ideal, but marred; after his initial defeat and injury he does not atomize into an aesthetic, intangible cloud of mist, but remains as a concrete body, abject in his fragmented appearance in comparison to wartime images of beautiful *sakura* blossoms. He is marked, not pure. He is tangible, not transcendent. He exists in the timeless landscape that has hosted immortal Japanese heroes, but shares nothing of their perfection and idealized appearances. Orbaugh discusses several wartime *kamishibai* that similarly use this theme of the pure and transcendent hero's body to encourage fervor in would-be soldiers who are still young children and show how efforts in war transfer to happiness on the home front. These are government-issued *kamishibai*

[48] See also Norma Fields, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993). A major theme in Fields's book is that of the *gyokusai* (shattered jewel), a pervasive symbol in wartime propaganda that served as an aesthetic metaphor for the total destruction of the Japanese body when defeat was in sight. Total destruction, like a jewel shattered into a thousand shards, rendered annihilation as heroic, beautiful, and to-be-controlled by the dying Japanese individual.

and were free entertainment, so they attracted even the poorest of children whose families did not even own a radio set (which cost just a little less than a month's wages for a laborer, Orbaugh points out), making it an extremely successful and wide-reaching form of propaganda.[49] In a *kamishibai* entitled *Jūgo no Chikara* (The strength of the home front, 1940), a young soldier learns that because of his diligent military service, his family's resulting financial hardship was eased when the local business owner to whom his family owed money forgives their debt, which results in his pleading to his commanding officer to be given the chance to prove his loyalty.[50] He is then sent to the front line. Orbaugh translates the story on the *verso*:

> …it goes without saying that, paying on heed to the shells raining down on him, he fought with peerless bravery and loyalty, and blossomed as a flower of the Imperial Army.[51]

That is, the boy died in battle. Consistent with the trope of the infallible cherry blossom image that came to stand for the national body, individual identity is obliterated in exchange for immortality; the singular body transfers to the collective of the national symbolic order, and in this way live on in beauty and wholeness (an unfettered blossom, linked directly to the easing of his family's struggle on the home front).[52] As flames and blossoms, the heroes of these wartime educational *kamishibai* transcend into the spirit realm, their bodies sacrificed for the preservation of eternal beauty and the maintaining of national purity. This trope of the pure, immortal spirit of the wartime hero runs in stark

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[49] Orbaugh, *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation*, 250.
[50] Script and picture panels by the Nihon Kyōiku Kamishibai Kyōkai (Association of Japanese Educational Kamishibai), 1940, 22 panels.
[51] Orbaugh, *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation*, 251.
[52] The theme of immortality for war heroes is not just represented in popular culture in wartime, but also serves as a foundational principal for national shrine-monuments like that of Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo. Here, those who sacrificed their lives for the cause of the nation in times of crisis (war) are enshrined and deified. Here, the loss of the corporeal body allows the hero to join in the collective national, immortal body of sacrificial heroes.

contrast to depictions of *jidaigeki* heroes after the war who (like Tange Sazen) bare real scars of violence and personal loss. The latter hero-type is human, displaying real wounds and memories of trauma, in contrast to his deified predecessor who is whole, then suddenly, mist. The *jidaigeki* postwar hero speaks of pain and earthly struggle rather than transcendence, and his body is allowed to fragment and transition as evidence of change.

The national body of wartime (*kokutai*) connoted through the infallibility of the pristine soldier's body finds expression in tropes connected to the natural environment—the Sun Goddess and metaphorical connections with cherry blossoms, wind, and mist. But the *jidaigeki* hero Tange Sazen displays a very different relationship to the local environment. It plays host to his transformation after trauma, functions as a witness to his actions and personal progress, and perhaps does change his bodily appearance, but not in the aestheticized, dematerializing way it does in the above-discussed wartime narratives. Divorced from the national body, Tange Sazen navigates the now inhospitable landscape alone, perhaps growing stronger in it, but wholly separate from it, as he is wholly separate from the feudal structure of society.

Temporal Displacement: Understanding the Now in Retrospect

The postwar depiction of the heroic individual as staunchly separate from social and political structures calls into question the historical power that these have had over personal subjectivity. Such a questioning of national control over the individual was firmly stamped out through wartime censorship, but this kind of message also made SCAP quite uncomfortable as well, as it worked to remake Japan in the postwar period. The motion picture industry in Japan enjoyed only a month of censorship free expression following the end of the war; SCAP issued a memorandum on October 16, 1945, that

effectively freed it from government control, then instituted a ban of its own on November 16 for a large group of period films deemed to be militaristic propaganda.[53] Among these banned films were Kurosawa Akira's *Tora no o o Fumu Otokotachi* (虎の尾を踏む男達, *The Men who Step on the Tiger's Tale,* 1945), which had ironically also been censored by the Japanese military government prior to defeat because it was deemed too pacifist and therefore antimilitarist.[54] The film is an adaptation of the Japanese *kabuki* play *Kanjinchō*, which is itself an adaptation of the *Noh* play *Ataka,* and as a *jidaigeki* film, displays particularly deep roots that connect it to a long domestic tradition of such tales outside of film. The film follows a general of the Minamoto clan, Minamoto no Yoshitsune (源 義経, 1159–1189), who is tasked along with his company of warriors (*bushi*) to secretly cross the border checkpoint. They sneak through disguised as monks but are discovered by the commander Togashi. He sends men after them, but to the surprise of the viewer, these men merely give the group food and *sake* instead of capturing them. That such a film, set in Japan's remote past, could cause such concern as both antimilitaristic and too militaristic in the here and now gets at the power of histories told at this moment in history; it relinquishes to viewers and groups the power of interpretation. This particular film privileges the few over the many and showcases unlikely success in the face of overwhelming structures of control. And in that, perhaps, it represents a critique of the structures of political control in any form.

S.A. Thornton, in her book *The Japanese Period Film: A Critical Analysis* (2008), identifies a couple of overwhelmingly pervasive themes in Japanese period films, using

[53] Orbaugh, *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation,* 42.
[54] Ibid., 43.

Kurosawa's *Shichinin no Samurai* (*Seven Samurai*) as an example.[55] She says that the characteristics of the traditional Japanese hero modeled in period films offers "a critique of the present in terms of the past, through an analogy with the past," and that in order to do this, they often have particular characteristics.[56] The character is a real, historical figure, or at least rooted to history through realism: dates, authentic costumes, real places that preface the narrative and preserve the impression of the real.[57] And, overwhelmingly, the hero is usually a tragic one.[58] Viewed through an anachronistic lens, the temporal displacement of the hero to a removed, historical setting allows the modern viewer to freely observe and analyze his actions. Such characteristics make heroes

> particularly suitable as the subject of the period film, whose function is criticism of [contemporary] society. Because of his universality he stands as a representative of the plight of all Japanese; because of his historicity, as a valid proof of the argument; because of his political associations, his situation refers directly to political and social problems criticized in the film.[59]

But even as Thornton identifies a general tendency in the period film to focus on national heroes, social capitals, and the legible signs of authenticity that bring an historical period to life, she also shows that some directors like Yamanaka Sadao (1909–1939) foregrounded narratives of "common," unremarkable, and imagined people in their period films whose stories are not relevant on a national scale, and therefore not beholden to national structures, as he did in his 1935 film *Tange Sazen Yowa: Hyakuman Ryō no Tsubo* (Tange Sazen and the Pot Worth a Million Ryō).[60] Here the nihilistic, maimed hero squabbles with his mistress (and usually loses), to portray a comical and petty version of

[55] Ibid., Thornton, *The Japanese Period Film*.
[56] Ibid., 50.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid., 51.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid., 48–49.

Osaragi's novelized hero—one that possesses similarities with the lazy and humorous hero in *Abarenbō Sazen.* This focus on the mundane, flawed and superbly human hero makes him relatable for the viewer; he may be modeled on the idealized historical hero, but his down-to-earth behavior brings him into the viewer's modern realm of understanding. Thornton asserts this to be a very small subcurrent in Japanese period film exemplified only in the work of Yamanaka and a couple of others; nevertheless, it provides a meaningful connection to San'yūkai's *Abarenbō Sazen.* And the petty, flawed, or unremarkable *jidaigeki* hero makes many appearances in the postwar films of Kurosawa as well, whose heroes fidget, play, and are often shunned by the community rather than upheld as a national model for heroism. The postwar *jidaiigeki* hero exists apart from the national body, and his continual appearance in the otherwise unpeopled landscape in *Abarenbō Sazen* works to visually drive this point home.

The space of the uninhabited, adverse landscape in *Abarenbō Sazen* is the site of conflict between Tange and his opponents in both of these *kamishibai.* And in *Abarenbō Sazen* as much as other *jidaigeki*-style *kamishibai* and film from the postwar period, the adverse landscape is a prominent theme and a force that challenges and shapes the hero (physically, and emotionally). Wild nature, fearsome and vast, is depicted as inhospitable and dangerous with its untamed beasts and unending expanses void of the amenities of civilization. But it is this landscape that shapes the *jidaigeki* hero, who is an outcaste of the human community.[61] As an itinerant wanderer, soldier on a mission, and the moral

[61] The landscape's strict, harsh, and formative power over the hero is a running theme in much of San'yūkai's *jidaigeki*-style *kamishibai*. In Arisawa Shirō (有沢 史郎) and Sado Masashi's (佐渡 正士) *Ōkami Tarō* (狼太郎 *Wolf Boy*, created after 1947) the protagonist becomes a wild child who seems to be more animal than human, as he is transformed in both body and character by the wild landscape. As an infant the boy was transported away from his home by his parents, as the defenseless were chased by a band of samurai. Both are killed in the context of pursuit, and the band attempts to kill the infant boy as

eye that keeps a close watch over events unseen by the majority of people, the *jidaigeki* hero braves the landscape to emerge changed but victorious. The uncivilized landscape is his territory, unforgiving as it is, and this in-between, nonspace (between nodes of civic infrastructure) is intimately tied to the identity of the *jidaigeki* hero. I would like to briefly discuss this visual-narrative theme as it appears in both this *kamishibai* and postwar film before moving on.

That the landscape is integral to the spirit of the *jidaigeki* hero is a prominent themes in Kurosawa Akira's *Shichinin no Samurai* (七人の侍 , *Seven Samurai,* 1954) as well, making it a good example of the genre's translation in other popular entertainment. In Kurosawa's film, the conviction of the samurai is not conveyed as much through the main battle itself (this actually occupies a relatively short portion of the end of the film) as it is through the literal moving and changing of the warriors' bodies, as they push on through the arid landscape and train their fighting skills in fields and forests to reach the village that they are to protect, and hone their skills (and those of the farmers) though physical practice such as sparring. In *Shichinin no Samurai* there are several shots of the

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well, but he is seen being carried off in his blanket by a pack of wolves (3-7 and 3-8), so the leader calls off the pursuit, assuming that the boy would be killed by the beasts. But in the last panel of the volume we see the boy, now grown to the age of around twelve and wearing his infant's blanket, ragged from age, as a short garment. His eyes are wide, the stride of his feet strong and aggressive, and his dark hair (similar in color and texture to that of the wolves who raised him as their own) waves violently in the wind. In the title panel to this volume, the boy is depicted standing with a wolf companion, who emits a howl from behind him, atop a rock cliff with sparse grass, the viewer's relative perspective placed slightly below him such that we seem to be craning our necks upward to catch a glimpse of the boy, stubborn and stable in stance and countenance despite his precarious position atop the cliff, the wild wisps of his wind-blown hair echoed in the undulated clouds behind him. His place at the edge of this cliff in the title panel foreshadows the boy's emergence in the last panel as a member of the wolf pack (in which he is depicted atop a similar cliff, the pack of wolves behind him), having not only survived his pursuers but grown in strength and age. His appearance in the title panel also plays as a foil to the death of his father in panel 3-6, who plummets head first down the cliff face to his death after being cornered by his pursuers. The viewer, having followed the pursued man through the adverse environment as he tentatively crossed rivers (gaze scanning the area with worry, hands outstretched, and center of gravity low, showing his distrust of the rushing water, 3-2) and shimmied down boulders (legs tucked up in a fetal-like position, afraid to extend his limbs downward, 3-3), has seen that he fears the wilderness as much as his pursuers. The positioning of the protagonist then, with stable feet, stern gaze, and weather-worn appearance, sets him apart as unusually fearless and tough, even in the face of wild nature.

warriors wandering country roads, vulnerable to the natural elements. And like the hero Tange Sazen, they become visibly different through exposure to the landscape over time. On the long and rocky road that the group takes en route to the village, dust and sun make for a miserable journey, yet the samurai move forward. In the well-recognized final battle five warriors (from an original group of seven, two having died in battle) take on a much more numerous group of bandits in torrential rain, mud stymying their movements and the downpour blurring their vision. In other words, the natural environment itself always seems a much more formidable enemy than the actual foes whom the *rōnin* face, and it is this environment that toughens their bodies and focuses their determination. The core identity of the warriors, then, is directly linked to the landscape. This is visually emphasized at the end of the film when the final three remaining warriors bury their four deceased comrades. In a wonderful inversion of space, the camera captures the three living men as they stare up at the hill on top of which the others have been interred. Burial mounds above and living men below, the latter seem more bound to the earth than those who are already dead. While all tenets of the *bushidō* code of mastered samurai surely do not apply to the masterless *rōnin,* it seems that his identity and values issue more directly from the Japanese landscape itself.

Abandoned for dead in the wilderness, Tange Sazen in the Tokyo version, struggles like other *jidaigeki* heroes often do to survive in the wild landscape alone, physically and socially isolated from his previous clan.[62] The inhospitable landscape

[62] In other writings I have explored this theme of the *jidaigeki* hero's isolation in and navigation of the adverse landscape as it is particularly articulated in terms of scale: the small body of the hero, depicted in the wide-open, wild landscape. In no other San'yūkai *kamishibai* is the colossal scale of wild nature more dramatically depicted than in Uta Hōshi's (歌法師) *Issunbōshi: Tale of Old Japan* (一すんぼうし：日本むかし話, created for San'yūkai after 1947). The tale that inspires this *kamishibai* might more correctly be classified as a national folktale than as *jidaigeki.* But in the San'yūkai iteration the little hero (no taller than

indeed contributes to his hardship here, but also serves as a space for the protagonist's transformation towards independence and vigilantism. Then later, in both the San'yūkai and Tokyo versions, it serves as the setting for Tange's personal retribution against lorded factions of *samurai* who still serve a feudal lord. In both versions Tange makes a fool of lorded *samurai* and their feudal leaders through battle or trickery (or both). The characters of the two boys accompany Tange Sazen on several adventures, battles, and shenanigans as he foils plots and makes a fool of a feudal lord's personal faction of goons, and these moments often take place in the remote landscape traversed on rustic country roads. Following the failure of the *ninja'*s ambush on the protagonist in town, a green-cloaked *samurai* rides on horseback to confer with the feudal lord who ordered the attack. The *samurai* and his group then attempt another attack on Tange Sazen, this time as he rides with a process of *norimono* (乗り物, here, palanquins). Foreseeing that this might happen, the hero splits off from the other two *norimono* (that hold his two young sidekicks). The children are ambushed, but the frustrated *samurai*, reaching them and finding that Tange Sazen is not with them, searches for the third *norimono* (Volume 6). Frustration and diversion are the results for Tange Sazen's enemies in this game of hide-and-seek. The group spots the protagonist's *norimono* grounded on an isolated road without pallbearers, and they crawl up a hill face in silence to mount their attack (followed by the children who scamper excitedly to see what will happen next). The last panel in Volume 6 shows the green-cloaked *samurai* who leads the group stabbing into the *norimono* with his *katana* to skewer the protagonist who does not have the advantage

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one *issun*, which is about three centimeters, and as such, the title is often translated in English as "The Little One-inch Boy") sets out into the wild landscape armed with a sewing needle that functions as his *samurai* sword, in a formulaic nod to the wandering *rōnin* tales in *jidaigeki*. Those elements of nature that would be scarcely an inconvenience to a full-grown human are monumental and life-threatening to the small hero, and the hero's small size elevates the apparent ferocity of the landscape by comparison.

of seeing his surroundings. But the first panel of Volume 7 shows Tange Sazen's skilled block of the thrust inside the *norimono* with the hilt of his own sword, inches from his face; despite the protagonist's isolated place—alone on the road, inside the *norimono*—we understand that despite the staged ambush on the protagonist, this was a planned trap for the enemy *samurai*, rather than for Tange Sazen.

The sequence in this *kamishibai* where the seemingly vulnerable Tange Sazen is ambushed by the *samurai* and his group in a remote area of the uninhabited landscape both mirrors and reverses a key event where the hero retaliates against he who caused his pain (his former feudal lord) through ambush, in the Tokyo version of the *kamishibai*. Severely wounded in the line of duty directed by his feudal lord, then abandoned and left for dead, the hero survives despite the odds, transcends his previous identity as a loyal *samurai*, and becomes an itinerant *rōnin* who serves only his personal code of ethics to undermine feudal social structures in vigilante style. The ambush scene in this *kamishibai* recalls in both setting and scenario the fateful moment of retaliation for loyalty betrayed, when Tange Sazen ambushes his onetime lord's *norimono* procession and steals an unattended horse, angering the lord and making a fool of his *samurai* attendants. Leaning on this popularly-known fictional history, the artists who produced the San'yuukai version do not directly recount the hero's back story like the Tokyo *kamishibai* does. But because the hero's figure in these sequential paintings does bare the marks—the gouged-out eye and missing arm—of the painful history that is usually attached to the character, and through the use of similar types of spaces and scenarios, the San'yuukai version engages the canonic telling without duplicating it. An aberration that functions in tangential relation to the canon, this *kamishibai* draws on a collective sphere of fictional

history while diverging from it with character details that morph the hero into something both familiar and unrecognizable for the educated viewer.

The Transformative Landscape

Intimately connected to Tange's bodily trauma in each variation of the story is the space that hosts both his assault and following transformation: the uninhabited landscape, far from established cities and largely untouched by humanity except for the formation of a rustic dirt road. In the Tokyo *kamishibai* the landscape is depicted as rocky, desolate—primarily brown with minimal greenery—and with vast, open expanses that would betray one to potential thieves and animal predators. It is an inhospitable environment, and the haggard pain depicted on the wounded face of Tange aptly echoes it in its wear and hardened lines. It is in this landscape that Tange undergoes his transformation from loyal subject to independent vigilante, from social member to marked outcaste, and his body therefore takes on its characteristic textures. Similarly, the natural environment often plays the part of devil's advocate in Kurosawa's films, complicating journeys and putting up resistance to the *samurai*'s bodily motion

In Japanese popular entertainment from the 1950s and 60s in-between, non-places (a term that I would use to describe the wild, unpeopled landscapes in the above *jidaigeki* examples) serve as a visual-spatial sign of the in-between period of the postwar—in between defeat and recovery, destruction and rebuilding, memories of trauma and the eventual future where they hold less sway over the individual.[63] In other words, space

[63] In his 1992 Essay "Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity," French anthropologist Marc Augé introduces the term "non-place": those removed, in-between spaces that are passed through or experienced *en route* to more significant "places" in modern life. In modern society places like airports and highways serves as his preferred examples. What I wish to evoke by using this term is that the adverse landscape, viewed through an anachronistic lens in *jidaigeki* entertainment resembles in

serves as a metaphor for progress over time, and vice versa. In Chapter 4 of his book *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Japanese Postwar Visual Culture, 1945–70* (2000), Yoshikuni Igarashi asserts that much of postwar literature and popular culture production projected a desire to "encounter the past in an in-between location" by foregrounding characters and settings ambiguously located between past and present that were "…deployed to suture historical juncture."[64] That is, postwar identity, the now, was conceived via the renegotiation of memories of the past. Specifically, Igarashi discusses the popular radio melodrama *Kimi no nawa* (1952), a story in which characters are haunted by memories of the past as they attempt to progress forward. "When consuming [such] fictional representations in the popular media," Igarashi says, "the audience 'returned' to and found means to exorcise the monstrous past… [while providing] alternative forms for past memories."[65] The past is viewed anachronistically from the present moment, yet maintains such a strong presence that future progress becomes weighed down by past memory, collapsing linear time into an ambiguous jumble. In the radio drama *Kimi no nawa* the character Machiko finds herself "caught between the old social mores and a news mode of behavior," Igarashi explains, in a stressing personal state of liminality that is further echoed in her love life, as she longs for the man whose name she does not know but feels she must move forward in her life without him. And as both setting for the eventual meeting of Machiko and her nameless love, and symbol of the protagonist's feelings of being caught between to moments, Tokyo's Sukiya Bridge

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concept those in-between places and experiences of modernity. See the 1995 English translation of Augé's essay, published in book form: John Howe, trans. *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity, Marc Augé* (New York: Verso Publishers, 1995).

[64] Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Japanese Postwar Visual Culture, 1945–70* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 104.

[65] Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory*, 105.

plays a central role in the characterization of Machiko's personal progress.

In San'yūkai's telling of Tange Sazen wild nature, fearsome and vast, is depicted as inhospitable and dangerous with its untamed beasts and unending expanses that are void of the amenities of civilization. It is a space with real dangers that is integral to the transformation of the hero but must be crossed quickly; it is not a space in which to linger. It serves as a proverbial bridge between past and present, like Sukiya Bridge does in the above radio drama. As an itinerant wanderer, soldier on a mission, and the moral eye that keeps a close watch over events unseen by the majority of people, the *jidaigeki* hero braves the landscape to emerge changed but victorious.

In the canonical telling of the story of Tange Sazen, the hero copes with the loss of his relationship to the feudal structure as well as that of eye and limb. And this *jidaigeki* hero makes a prominent showing, appropriately, in postwar Japan during a time of political occupation, the redrafting of a constitution, the rebuilding of an economy, and the reconception of individual identity independent of traumatic memory and the national body. Youthfulness, in this *kamishibai,* can be read in conceptual terms then, as a gesture toward the (re)growth of both individual and society in the historical moment. The hero's juvenile personality in *Abarenbō Sazen* designates him as one in the process of personal transformation, echoing the postwar *jidaigeki* tendency to highlight the particular, personal aspects of the subject *en route* to personal progress. The character's figure displays visible signs of traumatic memory. Tange Sazen calls on cultural memory via his placement in known earlier periods of Japanese history, but asks the viewer to evaluate history from an individual, outsider's perspective, rather than from that of a social consensus or government standpoint. He stands in stark contrast to the heroes of wartime

propaganda, rupturing the continuity of national narrative and, therefore, its hold over the individual.

CHAPTER THREE

VISUALITY AND DISTRACTION IN THE DISCURSIVE SPHERE: OSAKA *KAMISHIBAI* AND THE SAN'YŪKAI CIRCLE

This chapter situates postwar *gaitō kamishibai* within a wider sociohistorical context of creativity and survival, highlighting the understood status of the lone, individual creator who, perhaps like the wandering *rōnin* hero Tange Sazen, meanders *en route* to formulating personal and professional identity. In Tatsumi Yoshihiro's graphic novel *Gekiga Hyōryū* (*Gekiga Drifting*, 劇画漂流, 2008) Tatsumi implicates *gaitō kamishibai* in a discursive sphere concerning individual expression in postwar Japan, although this sphere is one based in the visibility of tangible creative production rather than written or spoken word.[66] Tatsumi's title image for Chapter Three depicts a *kamishibai* performer in Osaka displaying his picture-story to a horde of children who press toward the performer and his bicycle-mounted picture-stage, heads tilted up at extreme angles to see the painted panels and mouths agape in rapture.[67] Albeit an anachronistic representation of a typical performance context, it elucidates the distractive aesthetics that *kamsihbai* picture-stories like those that came out of San'yūkai that I discussed in Chapters One and Two embodied for viewers in postwar Osaka. Since *kamishibai* is depicted in graphic form here, the visual aspects of *kamishibai* of course

[66] Tatsumi Yoshihiro, *Gekiga Hyōryū* (*Gekiga Drifting*, 劇画漂流, Tokyo: Seirin Kōgei-sha Publishers, 2008).
[67] Tatsumi, *Gekiga Hyōryū,* 37.

takes precedent over its oral aspects. The performer's mouth is even concealed by his bodily arrangement, back to the viewer, and the panel captures the network of gazes that converges on the painted panels.

Visibility—of the performer and his picture-panels, glimpsed by the group of children who have assembled to watch the performance—unifies the group, even as each child reacts to the performance in his or her own way. A little girl in the foreground folds the fingers of one hand under her chin, as if in quiet philosophical consideration. The boy in front of her, front and center in the *manga* viewer's foreground, mouth partially open and right hand held outward in a loose clench, perpendicular to his body, seems to internalize the actions of the story's hero in bodily terms, perhaps cheering the protagonist on in his endeavor, or tensing his own body in anticipation of impending conflict. But in the immediate background behind this boy, only partially visible left and right of his small figure, are two boys whose facial expressions convey uncertainty and apprehension, rather than the total absorption of the boy and girl described previously. The furled eyebrows and sidelong glance toward the picture stage suggests a firm skepticism about a character or event and an internal dialog about what is being presented. The shorter boy figured to the right displays a far softer expression, lips pursed and eyes widened with apparent concern, suggesting a somewhat nervous suspension of decision on the merits and faults of whatever is happening in the story. Some children are more reticent and reserved in their bodily responses to the narrative, while some are more emotive, but each reacts in individual manner despite their shared identity in the moment as a group of viewers. And similarly, as the figure of the *kamishibai* performer appears pinned between the image's right frame and the mass of the bicycle-mounted stage, he is

visually isolated from all other figures. His left hand at face level, as though reaching to or just having switched picture panels, illuminates the tangible, manual nature of his performance, as he intimately interacts with his images. His hand, though, also appears like a funnel for his oral story, a conduit for passing meaning between mind and painted image; he almost appears to whisper to the panels since they are depicted in such close proximity. Viewing, that is, the consumption of *kamishibai* picture-story performance here, as much as the act of picture-story performance itself, are depicted as highly personal activities even as they take place in the public sphere. Visually cut off from any hint at the urban environment in this image, the varied individual processes of extracting or inserting meaning from/into the picture-story happen in isolation.

That *kamishibai* makes an appearance in a graphic novel memoire about the conception of *gekiga* (劇画, dramatic pictures, a sequential, narrative-driven form of visual arguably pioneered by Tatsumi in postwar Japan) in the mind of the individual creator is telling, not just of how forms of commercial entertainment like *kamishibai* and *gekiga* were simultaneously consumed in the historical moment, but of how *kamishibai* served as a discursive comparison to Tatsumi's own developing style of graphic novel storytelling in the postwar moment. That is, *kamishibai* was on Tatsumi's visual radar and competed with other stimuli in his visual field while he progressed as a creative professional.

A high school student on his way home from school, Katsumi becomes distracted by the *kamishibai* performance and pauses to take it in along with a group of much younger children. We see Katsumi's upper body in the background, his posture awkwardly hunched and his expression uncertain as he scans the sea of heads belonging

to the group of children in the foreground.[68] He has come in the middle of the narrative, and we see the *kamishibai* performer pound on a drum mounted beside his picture stage, ("*don, don*") while announcing that the hero of the story, Golden Bat, suddenly appeared from the sky. In the following panel Tatsumi's depiction of a *kamishibai* performer from Katsumi's perspective at the back of the crowd, the performer's mouth open in narration, hands concealed behind the panel stage preparing to switch panels, is accompanied by written commentary from the protagonist-narrator:

> In Shōwa 25 [1950] *gaitō kamishibai* was at its height of prosperity, and nationwide, there were 50,000 performers on the streets of Japan… The performers would sell treats like rice crackers with sauce [usually used to draw popular characters on the crackers] or mizu-ame [a viscous sugar syrup served on a stick]...[69]

And the other panel that occupies the lower portion of the same page depicts in larger detail typical picture-story panels, with more narrative explanation, stating that many of the well-known *manga-ka* of the postwar period—including Mizuki Shigeru, Kojima Goseki, Shirato Sanpei, and Ishihara Gojin were *kamishibai* producers (作屋) during this period. Tatsumi, using narrative text to intervene in the viewing of his drawn panels here, aptly approximates the experience of *kamishibai* viewing (picture plus narration), further showing the conceptual and historical connection between *manga* and *kamishibai.* He also acknowledges on the next page that during the war that some in the *kamishibai* industry (業者) referred to *kamishibai* as *gageki* (画劇, pictorial drama, which uses the same characters as *gekiga* in the opposite order), although the origin of the term is

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[68]Ibid., 49.

[69]"昭和２５年街頭紙芝居がもっとも隆盛をきわめていた全国では５万人ともいわれる紙芝居屋が街頭で活躍していた…ソースせんべいや水あめ子供たちに売って、二、三本の連続紙芝居演じてみせる." Ibid., 50.

unknown.[70] He also lends the usual reason for *kamishibai's* disappearance toward the 1960s: that its popularity was eclipsed by that of television (and, Tatsumi adds, weekly magazines). Nevertheless, *gageki* (*kamishibai*) and *gekiga* share a similar narrative structure and had the same creative minds propelling them in this period. But even so, Katsumi struggles to differentiate himself from any other known form of creative production, particularly from his closest group, mulling over specific titles to define his personal style, for example: "thriller" (*suriraa,* スリラー) "narrating/explanatory pictures" (*setsuga,* 説画), and "action pictures" (*katsudōga,* 活動画). Individual subjectivity still strains against the fabric of the group.

As I discuss below, in *Gekiga Hyōryū* both *kamishibai* and the cinema function as distractions that facilitate the artist's procrastination toward concretely defining his personal style, *gekiga.* Visually sensational and absorptive, they cause him to meander and delay *en route* to achievement in his academic and professional career. But as I explored in detail in Chapter One, the distractive aspects of *kamishibai,* its ability to engage viewers, to draw their attention to a greater network of activity and discussion outside their present course, is perhaps what makes it a particularly salient topic for considering the development of modes of expression in the postwar Japan depicted in *Gekiga Hyōryū* and discussed in academic literature. The goal of visual impact—distraction, in effect—is a theme not just in *kamishibai* performance, but in production process by which *kamshibai* panels are made, as my analysis of the Osaka circle of artists and *kashimoto* (*kamishibai* rental agency) San'yūkai shows. By encouraging individual to

[70]"戦時中から一部では、紙芝居を「画劇」と呼んでいた業者もいたがくわしい発生の時其はわからない." ""From since the war was still in full swing, kamishibai professionals also referred to kamishibai as gageki, although the details of the term's origin is not understood." Transaltion is my own. Ibid., 51.

veer off-course and engage in group participation, *kamsihibai*'s distraction becomes a tool for building democratic association.

Kamishibai performers judiciously placed themselves in positions where they could distract by being itinerant themselves. Agile navigation about the city, for *kamishibai* performers and other creative producers in postwar Japan, was a necessary act for survival since the *kamsihibai* performer, in particular, had to situate himself where he would be spotted by potential viewers and be able to pull them away from whatever they were doing so they would purchase his sweets and watch his performance. *Kamishibai* performers and other independent entrepreneurs also had to search out connections and resources in the meager postwar year in particular, often navigating the underground networks of the black market that was a necessary labyrinth for the acquisition of everyday necessities. And the visibility of *kamishibai* performers in the postwar moment, as hinted at by Tatsumi in his graphic novel, is but the tip of the iceberg for the collaborative democratic movements in which the *kamishibai* industry participated as it formed new workshops and organizations that ensured the democratic reformation of the medium according to postwar democratic values and sociopolitical necessity.

Visibility and Distraction

Visuality plays a critical role in the visual-discursive network described by Tatsumi in his graphic novel and allows for his characterization of visual attractions (or often, distractions from the task at hand) like *kamishibai* and the cinema as necessary diversions that contribute to an ultimate culmination of personal understanding. Tatsumi explains the conceptual impact that Kurosawa's *Shichinin no Samurai* (*Seven Samurai,* 1954) had on the young *manga-ka* Katsumi (a character who recalls the artist himself).

The reader, viewing Katsumi viewing the film, his eyes wide as they gaze up at the massive cinema screen, comes to also understand this impact. In these pages the film screen dominates the graphic novel's sequential frames and even takes it over entirely in places where Tatsumi depicts stills from the film in highly realist style. Tatsumi conveys how cinema's visually pervasive mode of presentation absorbs the viewer who sits in a darkened theater to create a visually invasive, sensational experience. The narrator-protagonist describes himself like a molting animal, saying that, as he watched the scene of the battle in the rain, it was as though scales (like those of a reptile) fell from his eyes.[71] Here impact is a pervasive, sensational visual experience, accompanied by personal interior response. And the narrator-protagonist likens this interior response to metamorphosis, or a sloughing off of the old. The character Katsumi is depicted as mentally incapacitated following the film, then embattled and invigorated shortly after—interior change has an outward toll—where he is shown at home reenacting for his brother the epic final battle (with a rolled-up newspaper as his *katana*).[72] Performing the role of samurai, Katsumi has internalized the film's visual content, conveying cinema's potential for impact on its individual viewers.

Tatsumi asserts film, as much as *kamishibai,* to be a fundamental source for the reconceptualization of visual storytelling for the *manga-ka*, but also a consuming visual distraction that allows him to disconnect from his work. Following Katsumi's reenactment of *Shichinin no Samurai* for his brother, the brother nags that he has not made any progress on his current project.[73] Film for the character Katsumi is a force for personal change that allows for a continual reconceptualization of his personal style, but

[71]"中でも雨の中次闘シーンはヒロシの目からウロくが落ちる思いがした." Ibid., 266.
[72] Ibid., 267.
[73] Ibid.

it is also a welcome escape from that work as a creator where he can slip into the role of viewer. But the constant oscillation of film's place in Katsumi's life over the course of the graphic novel, like *kamishibai,* which also serves as both distraction and object of serious consideration, seems a necessary part of personal progress. At times productive, and at times, idle, that individual moves forward in a meandering fashion. Meandering is a necessary method for ensuring connections to other forms of production that proliferate in the sphere of contemporary discourse, that is, to navigating the contemporary network of people and ideas.

Tatsumi Yoshihiro is the credited inventor of the *gekiga* graphic style and shares with the creators of the *kamishibai* discussed in Chapters One and Two a fascination with the *jidaigeki* genre, particularly in its potential for testing the boundaries and formulas of historical narrative practice. Tatsumi, through this memoir in graphic novel form, anachronistically shows his consideration of the nature and malleability of modes of historical storytelling centered on *jidaigeki,* and more importantly the Kurosawa-style engagement of, to be a vital force in his effort to grasp at an individual style of expression. I have shown that a similar negotiation of and participation in the dominant mode of storytelling embodied by *jidaigeki* is visible in the work of San'yuukai, but as in Tatsumi's work, *jidaigeki* functions as a familiar touchstone, appropriated as part of a creative collage that mingles historical and contemporary, familiar and original. And as two separate entities who both engage *jidaigeki* in this way, the *gekiga* circle started by Tatsumi and San'yuukai together denote how a diaphanous network of disparate modes of creative production can (and did) negotiate history's role in fashioning postwar identity in very similar ways.

Networks of Acquisition and Communication: Black Market Culture

This culture of itinerant individuals who negotiate networks of people and resources no doubt sprang out of the severe shortage of everyday necessities in immediate postwar Japan that, in light of the government's inability to disseminate sufficient aid, saw the formation of the black market. Historian John Dower, in his *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (1999), lends a critical history of the social structures and trends that characterized occupied Japan (1945–52), specifically the black market that was an invaluable enterprise where Japanese could attain food and necessities. Dower asserts that the black market (*yami-ichi*) was indeed a "dark world" (he points out the use of the character *yami* 闇, meaning "darkness") that was characterized by cloaked subversiveness and a resistance to surveillance or regulation. Operated through complex webs of personal relationships and gangster-style justice (*yakuza gumi,* gangs headed by godfather-type individuals, organized and subjectively regulated the markets), the black market created a communal structure that undermined official policies and economic valuation. This is not to say that the black market was completely egalitarian; its leaders kept order by enforcing a gang-style hierarchy. But as an alternative to national structures for aid relief and daily necessities, it offered a choice that empowered the individual to choose how (s)he participated in structures of acquisition and trade. That is, the very choice to opt for the alternative market and navigate its trade routes provided the individual with a small opportunity for sociopolitical expression.

Euphemisms for the black market (such as "free market," and "open-sky" or "blue-sky market") thinly veiled the thuggish entrepreneurship that drove this alternative

economy, forcefully striving for utopian symbiosis and democratic (capitalist) opportunity.[74] In a historical moment where government rations and official supply chains could not satiate public need, the black market did indeed allow its public to "freely" obtain what the government would or could not provide. By October 1945, it is estimated that 17,000 open-air markets flourished nationwide (mostly in large cities), and a month later, that number rose to 76,000.[75] It was a necessary evil that the government could not control, but perhaps in some respects needed in order to repair Japan's socioeconomic condition.

In Osaka, a sizeable black market developed.[76] There, a repatriate from the Philippines, Morimoto Mitsuji, organized the Umeda market in Osaka and "took pleasure in identifying with the tradition of the noble gangster who uses his influence to protect the weak against the rapacious," says Dower. Morimoto moved in with his people to "clean up" the Umeda "hodgepodge of amateurs who were being shaken down by small toughs."[77] Dower paints a heroic visual image of Morimoto for his reader, based on photographs and verbal descriptions: a Robin Hood-style vigilante who protected the weak, he usually wore a leather jacket, a knife tucked into his breast pocket, and a pistol on his hip. His heroic persona bears uncanny similarity to the popular hero Kurama Ko-Tengu in Hidari Hisayoshi's titular *kamishibai*, which Hidari created as part of San'yūkai. In one episode at the Osaka Municipal Children's Library the feisty hero single-handedly defeats a band of Shinsengumi (a special police force organized by the feudal

[74] John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 139.
[75] Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 140.
[76] Asahi Shimbun-sha, ed., *Koe* 1. Tokyo: Asahi Bunko (1984): 19, and other newspapers, quoted in Dower, 140.
[77] Paraphrased in *Embracing Defeat*, 141.

government *bakufu* and depicted here as corrupt) who threaten a lone, unarmed peasant on a bridge, playing the role of vigilante advocate for the people ascribed to Morimoto. I have no evidence to suggest that Hidari's hero is directly based on Morimoto, but the similar appearance, emphasis on intimidation, and Robin Hood mentality showcased by both the fictional and real life figures are quite similar. If nothing else, we can say that Hidari's character represents a desire for avenues of unofficial justice and social regulation that the official government representatives (the Shinsengumi in the story, and perhaps the Japanese courts, police and SCAP Occupational forces in reality) could not or would not provide.

Like the *kamishibaiya* who suddenly appears before the protagonist Katsumi on his way between tasks, in Tatsumi's *Gekiga Hyōryū* the protagonist's father, who is a door-to-door bicycle salesman, is equally sporadic in his appearances. He speeds about town on his bicycle, acquiring and peddling any sort of products he can, using connections and calling in favors. An uncanny reflection of the *kamishibaiya* in this graphic novel who also navigates the city on a bicycle, his miniature theater collapsed and anchored to the back, Katsumi's father can be seen speeding here and there, making connections and acquiring the odd product to keep his business afloat. With his highly irregular inventory and coded promises to customers to acquire whatever they desire, we can perhaps hazard that he is an agent for the black market.

Both bicycle salesman and *kamishibai* performer are shown to be as equally erratic and itinerant in his circumnavigation of the city. Katsumi's father comes and goes from the family house at rapid speed, always picking up products to deliver or bringing new products home. He collides with Katsumi's younger brother as he struggles out the

door with a crate marked "Shimizu tea."[78] He is short with his son and quickly takes off on his bicycle, with the crate of tea strapped to the back.[79] Katsumi's brother watches with seeming irritation as his father's figure rides off toward the background, the "*ga-cha ga-cha"* of his squeaky wheels emanating as he pedals away. Katsumi the *manga-ka* is equally mobile throughout the day, however. Just as the father returns home, his same crate of tea in hand, Katsumi bursts out of the door, colliding with his father and causing the crate to break open and reveal its contents: soap, canned fish, cigarettes, and the like (none of which are actually tea).[80] Although, as Tatsumi narrates, Japan's function as a base for U.S. military campaigns during the Korean War starting in June 1950 rebooted the Japanese economy, a state of extreme shortage of goods made supplies for entrepreneurs like Hiroshi's father rather irregular, even through 1950.[81] And surplus goods from the Occupation often found their way into Japanese households, serving as a significant supplement to domestically-available products, which becomes a source of humor as one of the salesman's clients returns a bar of "soap" that did not produced suds, and the salesman laughingly points out that it is not wonder because it is not soap, but cheese, which the client did not understand because the label was in English.[82] Gathering product from any source—from Japanese or the Occupation, from legitimate or illegitimate sources—the salesman scraped together a living in this meager moment, and occasionally experienced repercussions of such shady negotiations in the form of strong-arming heavies demanding interest on payment and jealous thieves stealing that which he had acquired. He skims product from premade packages to eventually make an extra

[78] Tatsumi, *Gekiga Hyōryū,* 7.
[79] Ibid., 8.
[80] Ibid., 23.
[81] Ibid., 62.
[82] Ibid., 63.

unity, and his children do not approve of his tactics to stretch his product, but his creativity goes toward the goal of supporting his family.

Resourcefulness in the acquisition of products (barely) keeps the Katsumi family afloat in the immediate postwar years as Tatsumi's graphic novel recounts, and the protagonist and his brother work to supplement the family's income. Kamishibai, too, was a niche that required skills of acquisition and negotiation. Sharalyn Orbaugh has discussed the role of the many *kashimoto* (*kamishibai* picture panel rental companies) that rented *kamishibai* panels to itinerant performers, as well as, on occasion, the candy that they sold to children to make their profit.[83] Indeed, San'ūkai functioned as a *kashimoto* itself, although there is no record of them also vending sweets to performers. However, as Allen Say depicts in his children's book *The Kamishibai Man,* which is informed by the research of Japanese folklore scholar Tara McGowan who writes the afterward, candy was often made at home by the *kamishibaiya* and his family.[84] Kata Kōji who authored the famous *kamishibai Golden Bat* recalled in the immediate postwar years the only treats available to sell were "scraps of flour fried in fish oil as flat crackers (*senbei*) and sweet potato slivers.[85] The *kashimoto* businesses certainly served as hubs for the acquisition of picture-story panels and sweets, but in meager times it holds that *kamishibai* performers would have acquired their products wherever and whenever they could.

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[83] See Sharalyn Orbaugh, "How The Pendulum Swings: *Kamishibai* and Censorship under the Allied Occupation," in Tomi Suzuki, Hirokazu Toeda, Hikari Hori and Kazushige Munakata, eds., *Censorship, Media and Literary Culture in Japan: From Edo to Postwar* (Tokyo: Shin'yôsha, 2012): 161-174, 162.
[84] Allen Say, *The Kamishibai Man* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005).
[85] Kata Kōji, *Kamishibai Shouwashi.* Tokyo: Rippuu Shobou (1971), 192. Cited in Barak Kushner, "Planes, Trains and Games: Selling Japan's War in Asia," in Jennifer Purtle and Hans Bjarne Thomsen, eds. *Looking Modern: East Asian Visual Culture from Treaty Ports to World War II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Center for the Art of East Asia, 2009), 261.

Circles and Associations: Individual Growth in (Contrast to) the Social Group

In postwar creative production (and Tatsumi's depiction thereof) the navigation of networks of people and businesses works to enrich discursive bonds and becomes, as Justin Jesty says, a visible marker for grassroots democratic expression in the moment. Rather than working as a small part of a collective, individuals view themselves as strong, autonomous, creative voices who reach out to a group of similarly-minded people. Rooted specifically in what Jesty calls a "community of visibility," the act of viewing and allowing others to view what you create becomes a radical gesture of populist political significance. Further, my analysis of San'yuukai as a democratic circle in Jesty's terms serves as a concrete example of the type of democratic participation that emerged out of necessity to become a mode for postwar expressions of individual subjectivity and group identity, specifically based in visual-tangible output. Out of the "wisdom of poverty," as the saying goes, creative avenues for the acquisition of ideas and materials that were once a means of coping with severe want and hardship become the same means by which discourses on creativity grow and manifest in the 1950s and onward. Rethinking democratic participation in a fashion similar to Jesty and others, I accordingly argue here that populist forms of entertainment like *kamishibai,* including their democratic circles in which the panels themselves are produced as much as their web of entrepreneurial performers, embodied a distinctly organic iteration of domestic democratic identity.

In Tatsumi's graphic novel, we see the protagonist as much as other characters have to struggle independently despite being their associations and connections; struggling alone is an emblem of postwar identity. Like the *kamishibaiya* and his father the bicycle salesman, *Gekiga Hyōryū's* protagonist Katsumi is highly erratic in his

movement around the city, suggesting that itinerancy was a symptom, or coping mechanism, for the hardship of postwar life. The main character and his allies sprint between publishers and deals, constantly negotiating and producing multiple commissions at the same time. Personal progress for the *manga-ka* is meandering, and success, intermittent. He forms professional associations that will ensure the survival of their new dramatic visual style and negotiates with publication managers who occasionally wheel and deal with shady characters to keep the publishing house and its creative ventures afloat. A complex web of interpersonal connections facilitate day-to-day survival, and a running theme in the graphic novel is the formation of circles of likeminded creators who mutually support one another in this turbulent period. Early on Katsumi forms the Children's Association for Manga Study (子供漫画研究会), which earns him an interview with a reporter from the Mainichi Shinbun about the changing course of *manga* in postwar Japan.[86] The interview turns into a documented roundtable discussion with one of the fathers of modern Japanese manga: Tezuka Osamu. A conversation between generations, this interview about personal paths parallel to a larger changing world of culture and entertainment characterized (perhaps paradoxically) by highly independent action on the part of the individual as well as a reliance on networks of mutual support. And here, we see that postwar *manga*, like the black market and, most significant for my argument here, *kamishibai* necessarily relied on the formation of democratic networks of cooperation to simultaneously propel individuals forward.

The association of *kamishibai* performers in Osaka, Japan known as San'yūkai (三邑会) was founded in 1947 by *kamishibai* panel artist Shiozaki Genichiro (塩崎源一郎).

[86] Tatsumi, *Gekiga Hyōryū*, 38–43.

Shiozaki was a painter of *kamishibai* panel pictures who surrounded himself with other panel artists and *kamishibai* performers to form a group network of artists that ensured mutual monetary gain and notoriety. Shiozaki converted the operation from a living association of creative professionals to a museum in 1955 (coinciding with *kamishibai's* wane in popularity in the late 1950s). Shiozaki was indeed the founder (and archivist in many ways) for San'yūkai, but he did not dictate the types of narratives and characters created by other visual artists in his circle, and while he lent the panels that he created to many performers as a *kashimoto*, he had no control over how they performed the narrative in live context (or where they performed). San'yūkai was a circle of creative professionals that facilitated a larger commercial network that also included itinerant performers. And the work that came out of it was diaphanous in both style and focus and directly linked to individual creators (each picture-story bears the name of the story and image creators).

Regardless of stylistic and narrative differences, Shiozaki valued the organic formation of group identity, and in a message written in 1999 shortly before his death he mentions by name several of San'yūkai's panel artists along with the more well-known stories created or performed by each artist, demonstrating the diversity and creative autonomy of the group.[87] "Together, stories of all genres, from laugh-out-loud comedies, hero biographies, *jidaigeki* sword dramas, detective thrillers, tear-jerker human interest stories, heartwarming fairytales and folktales, tales of millionaire heroes, tales of the bizarre, science fiction, horror, quizzes of wit, and the like thrilled the minds of children

[87] See the Shiozaki Fairytale Kamishibai Museum website: http://www.gaitoukamishibai.com/museum/artist-top.html.

and made their hearts pound."[88] The unifying theme is simply the production of entertaining stories, for a public, that is, to make visible their work to those who would view it. In this message Shiozaki highlights the connection between *kamishibai* artists and their community to engender the reader's understanding of the *kamishibai* in the postwar context with sentimental notions of democratic cooperation, creative cultural production, and community camaraderie, but one that I argue ultimately hinges on human difference.[89]

As a group of diverse, creative individuals, the collective diaphanous styles that come out of San'yūkai becomes another rallying point for group identity. In other words, difference ironically allows for the formation of an organic group. And this can be understood directly from looking at Shiozaki's own work, still housed in the museum that was once his personal residence and workshop, which is quite different in visual style and genre from the examples discussed in the following chapters that show how the *jidaigeki* trend flourished in San'yūkai through the works of Shiozaki's associates and Shiozaki's *laissez-faire* approach to group leadership. Shiozaki-san produced stories for and about young boys and girls, sometimes set in fantasy- or folktale-style settings, and sometimes contemporary showing. His saturated candy-like reds, greens, pinks, and yellows evoke modern luxury and the safety of town life, whereas the hues in the above *jidaigeki* examples, with their pine greens, rock browns, and silt grays work toward a more naturalistic, ragged depiction of environments; they articulate very different types of

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[88]「お笑いユーモアもの」「偉人伝」「チャンバラ時代劇」「探偵サスペンスもの」「お涙頂戴人情ばなし」「ほのぼの童話、昔ばなし」「活劇ヒーローもの」「奇想天外・支離滅裂もの」「宇宙サイエンス・フィクションもの」「怪奇ホラーもの」「とんちクイズ」など、子ども心をワクワク、ドキドキさせた、あらゆるジャンルのストーリーがそろっています。Ibid.

[89] See the Shiozaki Fairytale Kamishibai Museum website: http://www.gaitoukamishibai.com/museum/aisatu1.html.

narrative worlds, and very different kinds of characters therein.

In *Gekiga Hyōryū* Tatsumi shows how the identity of the individual creator often stands apart from the group as a whole in this way; Katsumi in particular asserts that even while he shares certain devices and interests with his cohort, that his style, his "*gekiga*" as it comes to be called, is unique. Individual style, however, is shown to be forged through debate and discourse with the group, through exposure to the work and criticism of others, allowing individuality to become apparent in terms of small nuances and divergence via comparison. First, as an associate of the *manga* publisher Hinomaru Bunko & Co., Ltd. ((株)八興日の丸文庫), then as a member of the smaller circle of artists who contributed to the monthly magazine *Shadow*, a "detective book" of *noir*-style narratives never technically called *manga* because of its stylistic divergence from the usual mode, and then as a de facto leader of the *gekiga* trend, Katsumi finds his niche in a group (or groups) of creators. Like his cohort, he habitually created a type of *manga* that challenged the usual connotation of the term that, because of its use of images to drive narrative sequence, came to be called *gekiga* (劇画, dramatic pictures), which was a stark divergence from the short-form *manga* that had been popular to that point but shared much in common with, significantly, *kamishibai*, which was often called *gageki*. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Katsumi found himself often awed and distracted by *kamishibai* as much as film, but both of these attractions served to help him better enumerate his personal style of graphic storytelling.

My goal in connecting the freelance structure of associated artists of *gekiga*, as depicted in Tatsumi's graphic novel, to the type of democratic circle exemplified by San'yuukai is, first, to show a consistent use of democratic networks for mutual support

of the creative individual in postwar Japan. But second, I also wish to show how creative circles themselves existed as part of a larger discursive network in which ideas and methods could be exchanged. As itinerant, participatory individual *kamishibai* and *manga* artists alike functioned as part of public and professional spheres. The San'yūkai circle (and, indeed, Katsumi's group of likeminded *manga-ka*) had much in common with the democratic structures that helped Japanese nationhood to transform in the postwar context. The type of creative public engagement fostered through creative tangible production in *kamishibai* as much as *gekiga* generates a distinct version of visually-based discourse—what Justin Jesty calls a "community of visibility." In his Ph.D. dissertation entitled *Arts of Engagement: Art and Social Movements in Japan's Early Postwar,* Jesty explores the connection between art and activism in early postwar Japan, "in order to show how creative and expressive engagement became part of the project of building a participatory, democratic culture."[90] The visibility of creative production, in other words, became the tangible expression of democratic ideals.

Defining and Questioning Postwar Democracy in Japan

Many historians (John Dower included) characterize Japan's postwar democracy as a failure. In his *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* he discusses a collection of cartoon drawings by Katō Etsurō from 1946 titled *Okurareta Kakumei,* or "the revolution we have been given," that explore the comic paradox that the bestower—the Allied forces—of torrential attacks that the Japanese had recently been prepared to battle (soldiers and civilians alike) suddenly became a force for liberation (albeit one that

[90] Justin Jesty, *Arts of Engagement: Art and Social Movements in Japan's Early Postwar*, a dissertation submitted to the faculty of the division of the Humanities in candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2010), xv.

overwhelmed and did not leave Japan any choice).[91] Dower points to Katō's descriptions of American democratic intervention in Japanese life as raining from above: first as bombs, then as a voice for democracy (but equally torrential). In one cartoon Katō depicts a crowd of Japanese stretching their arms toward the sky, which is filled with parachutes that hold canisters, labeled "Democratic Revolution."[92] The drawing's heading reads, "A Gift from Heaven," with the caption:

> The downpour of bombings and incendiaries abruptly ceased. Then, form the very same sky, the gift of peace began to descend. So-called democratic revolution! Bloodless revolution!
>
> Well, we Japanese, who lost in war, who were exhausted by war, how did we receive this gift? How are we receiving it?[93]

Jesty, in contrast to Dower, however, argues that "democracy thrived as both aspiration and everyday practice in the many grassroots social and cultural movements that flourished in the period from 1945 to around 1960," not merely as an ideal forced upon Japan "from above," as Dower says.[94] Jesty explains the role of the cultural circle (rendered simply as *sākuru* in *katakana*), a type of participatory group where like-minded individuals met, discussed, and in some cases acted to disseminate ideas according to their common beliefs and interests. These circles have an intimate tie to the dissemination of print literature, as they consumed popular magazines (on literature, poetry, and politics, often) and even manufactured and distributed amateur publications in many cases.[95] Jesty describes typical action in such circles:

> …[S]ome serial publications included sections where these readers could submit their own writings and participate in the most public instantiations of that

[91] Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 66.
[92] Ibid., 67.
[93] Translated in Ibid., 67.
[94] Jesty, *Arts of Engagement*, xv.
[95] Ibid., 19.

> community of interest. In addition to active readerships, there were active listenerships and viewerships.... Their self-published newsletters were sometimes simply announcements of upcoming films, but in many cases also included news, film reviews and criticism written by society members.[96]

The tangibility and visibility of materials here facilitates democratic participation. And I argue that in San'yūkai as well, creative production disseminated through a network of organic relationships worked to expand the discursive field and garner participants.

Jesty also shows how the "wisdom of poverty," as the Japanese saying goes, drove publications and their groups to be creative in their production and distribution, using low-technology, improvised, manual methods to produce materials via labor of community sentiment:

> Although the early postwar interest in culture is often described as a celebration of freedom, the words in many of the tiny journals that survive today were printed using a mimeograph technique (*gariban*), where each master sheet was etched by hand into a waxy template, and each page printed by pressing ink through the template, one sheet at a time. These are testimonies wrung from scarcity, indicative of a level of investment in shared creative involvement which is not adequately described as celebration.[97]

Supplies for such endeavors often had to be purchased through the black market (as did nearly any type of material in times of extreme scarcity, c. 1944–1946, which suggests that *kamishibai* professionals resorted to the same) endowing them with further democratic if subversive significance.[98] Shiozaki's workshop, what is now a museum, is still preserved in working order and attests to the manual labor, the tactile, personal methods, that characterize postwar *kamishibai* panel production. San'yuukai was founded by Shiozaki in 1947, though we can assume that he dabbled in panel production before this time, in the most difficult years following Japan's defeat, as he worked toward

[96] Ibid., 20.
[97] Ibid., 29.
[98] Ibid., 119.

assembling a group of artists. First sketching and painting (with watercolor, ink, or acrylic) a composition on paper, the artist would then hand-cut the cardboard panel to fit the paper painting, affix the two together with glue (doing the same, typically with the inscribed narrative script on the panel's *verso*), and lacquer the panel to seal and prevent damage. We can imagine the resourcefulness necessary to keep this process going when paper, paint, and other supplies were difficult to come by in the immediate postwar years. San'yuukai's extant *kamishibai* panels possess the mark of manual production and resourceful acquisition that pervaded postwar publications and other disseminated materials. It is a creative form expressive of ingenuity in the face of scarcity and denotes the kinds of tangible output that emerged from postwar black market culture. But it also connotes the type of democratic social structure analyzed by Jesty.

Jesty shows that the effects of scarcity postwar spurned creative solutions for alternate modes of acquisition and communication, and further, that these solutions (the black market and these humble methods of literature production) worked in tandem to support the democratic community. He points to the seeds of democratic mobilization that emerge necessarily out of poverty and need. Not beholden to official government structures of national relief, the black market and its subsidiary circles made do together, without the top-down dissemination of aid. Indeed, such a diffuse network is more characterized by work and negotiation at the lowest levels, in small corners of the city that began to work together in an organic fashion for mutual interests; it is truly a grassroots movement in this sense. With its focus on manual production through resourceful means for the purpose of individual self-expression, San'yuukai's *kamishibai* speaks to a determination not just to survive, but to find a new and interesting voice in the

postwar context. And as I discussed in previous chapters, the oddball honesty of *jidaigeki*-style vigilante heroes became one expression of the personal journey toward identity and subjectivity in the postwar moment. But I would offer that the mere act of producing in this adverse context (panels, and performance)—that is, the act of expressing in a public context through work—does very much the same thing.

The importance of production in any medium or form was perhaps nowhere more concretely expressed than in the collective work of the Gutai Art Association (具体美術協会), founded in 1954 by Yoshihara Jiro (1905–1972). Creative camaraderie and cooperation are foregrounded as themes in the Gutai Art Association's six-day event *International Sky Festival* on top of the Takashimaya Department Store in Osaka, Japan, in particular. In connection with the *9th Gutai Exhibition*, it was a massive undertaking of international collaboration between Gutai, other Japanese artists, and those from France, Italy, Spain, and the United States. Artists contributed original paintings and drawings (usually on paper), small in scale and easily shipped overseas, on which members of Gutai then worked together to enlarge, transfer by hand onto banners, and hang along with their own designs from helium balloons tethered to the roof of the department store. Gutai's founder Yoshihara Jiro (1905–1972) describes *International Sky Festival* in the 11th issue of the *Gutai* publication (1960), his words printed in both Japanese and English, describing the visual impact of the collective insight and manual labor that went into this event:

> Each day [a] combination of the international artists created a variety of impressive effects even more exciting than previously anticipated. High, trembling, swaying, low, sometimes leaning on the strong wind… until at last one of them flew away and never returned. We experienced again the first thrills of kite flying, reminding [us] of our childhood endeavors in this direction. The only regret is that it was not possible for all the exhibiting artists to be together to share

this dramatic moment of seeing their works sailing in the vast sky.[99]

A spectacular site, the happening recalls the simple visual pleasure that Yoshihara associates with childhood. Not unlike *kamsihibai,* which can easily be written off as cheap children's entertainment, simple pleasure is only possible through the careful networking and organization of people and materials. A mere momentary distraction for some, this happening signals a core theme in Gutai art production: that work gives way to personal expression and contributes to the concrete enumeration of group identity in the public sphere.

Like the postwar circles discussed by Jesty, Gutai was interested in the dissemination of tangible materials. Ming Tiampo begins the introduction to her book *Gutai: Decentering Modernism* (2011) with a description of how international cooperation in *International Sky Festival* quite literally put Gutai on the proverbial map of global postwar art.[100] Specifically, this happened though the dissemination of Gutai's own publication that

> …made its way around the world in the suitcases of artists who participated in the exhibition and in special packages prepared for art-world interlocutors across oceans and continents, decentering modernism from the periphery.[101]

She calls distance an "impediment" that was overcome through the travel of concrete materials, an idea that resonates with Jesty's description of the postwar community of visibility in Japan.[102] Tiampo argues that Gutai, instead of insisting that heavy artworks be transported across thousands of miles for the event, asked artists to submit sketches: portable, original art that could travel. Gutai favors the agile but tangible, and yet still

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[99] *Gutai* 11, No. 1 (1960), 2–3.
[100] Ming Tiampo, *Gutai: Decentering Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Ltd., 2011), 1.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid., 2. The author uses the term "concrete" with special emphasis here, as the name Gutai literally means concrete or corporeal, as opposed to abstract or figurative.

exposes the problems inherent to representation by interpreting these original drawings in the large banner format. Tiampo emphasizes Gutai's expressed desire for concreteness in art, as voiced in Yoshihara's Gutai Art Manifesto: "In Gutai art, the human spirit and the material shake hands."[103] And with its emphasis on manual production, transportation, and the (re)assemblage of a final, tangible product, Gutai's *International Sky Festival* denotes a postwar penchant for democratic expression through manual labor.

The role of community, professional, and special interest associations in Japan is nothing new; to the contrary, such organizations had in wartime especially an important role in disseminating information and aide from the top of the national hierarchy downward. Writing in 1978, Thomas Havens looks back on wartime community councils and neighborhood organizations in Japan and asserts that the formation of community councils and neighborhood organizations was an attempt on the part of the home ministry to solidify local administration in every city, town, and village in Japan (in a similar way to how the *iemoto,* 家元, system solidifies government control of cultural production in the intangible arts).[104] But it is the grassroots restructuring of associations and their organic formation independent of institutional power, as exemplified by San'yūkai or the *gekiga* movement, that sets postwar circles apart from earlier kinds of associations. In other words, it is the role of a collective of individuals with goals and ideas that characterizes such circles as new and different.

[103] Quoted in Ibid.
[104] Thomas R.H. Havens, *Valley of Darkness: The Japanese People and World War Two* (Lanham, MD, University of America, 1986), 37.

Conclusion: Visuality, Labor, and Democratic Culture

Like Jesty, I would assert that democratic values can be found at the level of everyday life in postwar Japan, and I would extend his argument toward *kamishibai*, not merely because of the democratic model of production espoused by Shiozaki for his association of artists, but because *kamishibai* performance, fostered itinerant venues for community entertainment. That is, the performance arm of *kamishibai* served as the means of dissemination and discussion of the tangible production of the circle. San'yūkai likely would have utilized the same subversive threads for the acquisition of materials as any other circle for cultural production in the postwar context: the black market. In this way, *kamishibai* is implicated in the web of postwar democratic grassroots culture via its materials for and modes of production and its unofficial avenues of dissemination and communication. *Kamishibai* is distractive, as Tatsumi's novel points out and as Domon Ken's photograph shows, detracting individuals away from their private schedules. But it is its ambiguous place—somewhere between necessary jaunt on the meandering path toward personal change, and indulgent distraction—that makes it such an efficacious and impactful force of visuality in the postwar context. *Kamishibai* utilizes its visuality to, perhaps invasively, place itself at the center of democratic participation.

CONCLUSION

Gaitō kamishibai has long since disappeared from the visual field of quotidian public life in Japan. Now largely confined to nostalgic memory, it is typically spoken of in the past tense. Japanese media scholars like Yamamoto Taketoshi (Professor Emeritus at Waseda University, Tokyo) generally assert that television's proliferation in the 1960s in Japan ensured *kamishibai'*s fall from popularity.[105] The usual story of *kamishibai'*s demise, that television killed the *kamishibai* star so to speak, is reiterated in collective memory as it is in Allen Say's illustrated children's book *Kamishibai Man*. In Say's book a figure of a young girl leans out of the window of her home to admonishingly *shush* the *kamishibai* performer who passes by outside, calling children to hear his story, because she cannot hear the television over his yelling.[106] In the epilogue to Yamamoto's book *Kamishibai: Street Media* (2000) he recalls how children in 1960s Japan, whose families could not yet afford their own television, would wander in small packs to homes and shop fronts to get a glimpse of their favorite broadcasts (instead of seeking out the *kamishibai* man).[107] But as families became more affluent, he intones, children ceased their wandering and sought entertainment indoors, away from the streets and crowds. Indeed, television's early name in Japan, *denki kamishibai* ("electric kamishibai"), seems to herald it as a new, high-tech replacement for the old form of entertainment embodied by

[105] See for example Yamamoto Taketoshi's book *Kamishibai: Machikado no Media* (紙芝居街角のメディア, *Kamishibai: Street-corner Media*) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobun Publishers, 2000).
[106] Allen Say, *Kamishibai Man*, 22.
[107] Yamamoto, *Kamishibai*, 169, paraphrasing the original Japanese.

kamishibai. But while its popularity has diminished, and the majority of its performers and panel artists have long since migrated to other media and professions—in particular, *manga* and *anime*—the street form of *kamishibai* has not been completely forgotten.

Kamishibai may largely be limited to the realm of memory in Japan today, but it still finds use as a form of visual expression that mediates memory (not simply serving as a subject of) in the contemporary moment. Aozona Mikan, one of the *kamishibai* performers whom I met at Senkōji, invited me to her upcoming performance at Peace Osaka. Officially named the Osaka International Peace Center, Peace Osaka, as it is popularly called, is a museum that negotiates wartime histories of air raids in the Osaka area, situating local memory and experience within national histories of wartime trauma. The museum's expressed mission is to educate and facilitate discussion on this history with the ultimate goal of world peace. And Aozona's *kamishibai* performance was a particularly salient expression on how the museum hopes to do so, both locally and internationally. On July 7, 2014, she performed a *kamishibai* adaptation of Nakazawa Keiji's *manga Hadashi no Gen* (はだしのゲン, *Barefoot Gen*, first serialized in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* from 1973) at Peace Osaka. Nakazawa's *manga* was part of a series of autobiographical works by the publisher's associated artists and works as an extended telling of the artist's own experience of the nuclear bomb in Hiroshima as a child. As a young boy he watched as neighbors, friends, and family suffered the harrowing bodily effects of the nuclear blast or died in secondary atrocities, like several members of his family who died trapped in the burning rubble of their home. *Barefoot Gen* has long held a central place in efforts of didactic storytelling aimed at the remembrance and future prevention of nuclear war, beginning with its translation and dissemination to countries

around the world with Project Gen in 1976, a volunteer effort on the part of Japanese and American translators in Tokyo. And it voices with directness the antiwar views of Nakazawa, which are also the echoes of his father who was a conscientious objector in wartime (and Gen's father in the *manga* is indeed intimately modeled on Nakazawa's father). Drawing on cultural memories of war as much as collective, individual memories of lived experience like Nakazawa's, Aozona's performance worked toward the transmission of memory of trauma and hardship from the older generation to the younger via the act of picture-storytelling, to facilitate discussion and, as the museum would have it, promote global peace.

One of Justin Jesty's case studies that he uses to illustrate how visuality facilitates community interaction, particularly as it imparts understanding on histories of personal and national trauma during wartime, is Maruki Toshi and Iri's *Hiroshima Panels* (原爆の図, 1950–1982). And these panels, in the way that they set at the apex of audience consideration aided by oral explication like Aozona's performance of *Barefoot Gen*, illuminates the performative didactic history in which *kamishibai* here takes part. Maruki Toshi and Iri (husband and wife) painted the series of panels together over the course of thirty-two years, the first of which they completed in 1950. There are fifteen panels in all, each measuring 1.8 meters high and 7.2 meters long; it was a massive undertaking in terms of sheer size and time commitment. Millions of people have viewed the panels, as they have toured the world in the context of peace movements and campaigns against nuclear arms.[108] The scenes on these panels do not come from the artists' own memory; rather, they are visual manifestations of stories told to them by friends, family, and

[108] See Kozawa Setsuko, *Genbaku no zu: Egakareta "kioku," katarareta "kaiga"* [(*The Hiroshima Panels: Painted memories, storied paintings*) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002).

strangers—a testament to the artist's valuing of cultural narrative as a didactic and discursive tool. Maruki Toshi and Iri accompanied the panels as they travelled, relaying their stories to live audiences so as to create a connection between oral narrative, shared experience, and visual image. They served as ambassadors to a community of collective memory via circulation of their panels and the telling of the community's stories. Jesty asserts that beyond their function as art objects, the *Hiroshima Panels* "are one part of an expanding network, part of a community and a communication that was only possible insofar as people sustained it, kept contributing to it, and kept the images visible [where] exhibition was… a forum for multiple ways of identifying and reacting to the paintings."[109] Exhibition in this context, as in *kamishibai,* is not merely the making visible of pictorial narrative, but rather, the elucidation of meaning from it—whether historical or contemporary—via live oration.

The creative act of storytelling, expressed publicly in the postwar period, is an important gesture that empowers the performer to speak on behalf of a domestic cultural history and binds the audience together to form an integrated community. While Japan in many ways has long since moved past its identity as "postwar," I would offer Aozona's *kamishibai* performance at Peace Osaka as an example of the living tradition of picture-story performance in Japan that continually helps to situate the contemporary individual in reference to historical narrative. Storytelling, aided by images, works to concretely express identity in (contrast to) canonic subjects. And here, the very act of storytelling itself is a means by which one can participate in narrative history in a very intimate and personal way. *Kamishibai* occupies a perhaps paradoxical place at this point in Japanese history, then, as it still seeks to foster recollection and understanding, but is itself subject

[109] Jesty, 72.

to the limits that come with memory's revision of historical narrative as a "nostalgic" form of entertainment.

The history of *gaitō kamishibai,* from its early rise to popularity during the Fifteen Years War, as discussed by Sharalyn Orbaugh, to its near-total disappearance from the public sphere toward the 1960s also hints at a related history in Japan concerning the privatization of viewing habits. With regard to changing viewing habits, Yamamoto's above description of the rapidly-disappearing packs of children who would stalk the streets in search of a single television set to crowd around in the 1960s shows the dwindling of street-level consumption of entertainment in this moment. At first part of the massive crowds that met the *kamishibai* man each day, then as smaller, extant packs of less wealthy children whose families had not yet purchased a television set, we seem to witness, through Yamamoto's description, the extinction of a specific type of children's entertainment consumption. As the children move indoors to watch television, they also part ways with the group, to become immersed in a far more isolated type of viewing. This phenomenon, which admittedly has become a popular historical anecdote to explain *kamishibai'*s demise, begs the question of how new media technologies affect viewing habits in Japan, as they do in the rest of the world, as family discretionary income increases and entertainment becomes a solitary affair, in the Late Twentieth and Early Twenty-First centuries.

Another potential avenue for future research related to *gaitō kamishibai* might situate the popular street theater in conversation with the more conceptual, experimental itinerant venues of theatrical performance that crop up in the latter half of the Twentieth Century, both in Japan and globally. The Japanese troupe known as the Kuro Tent, or the

Black Tent Theater, founded in 1968 as "Theater Center 68," for example, as a travelling pop-up venue, heavily emphasizes the role of actor-as-narrator, and therefore focuses on the potential for expression in bodily gesture and voice.[110] The Japanese troupe bears significant conceptual commonalities with international groups such as Fluxus, who integrate and question the apparent boundaries between different artistic media that often find implementation in performance. *Gaitō kamishibai,* despite its consumption as light-hearted commercial entertainment, allowed for the movement of its itinerant performers through the city who could then place themselves at the apex of community participation and foster considerations of cultural modernity, and as an integrated medium that brings together image, live performance, and even text, questions the boundedness of these individual mediums.

[110] See the troupe's website, maintained by its current members. http://www.ne.jp/asahi/kurotent/tokyo/english.html.

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